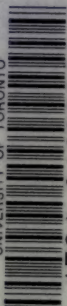


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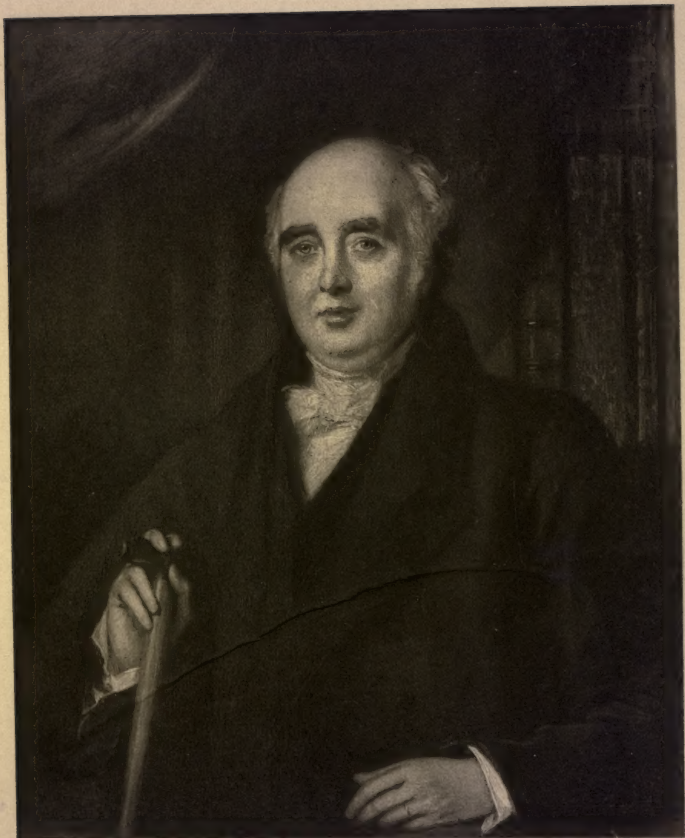
FURTHER MEMOIRS OF  
THE WHIG PARTY

1807—1821









*E. R. Lister, Pinx.*

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*Henry Richard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Lord Holland*



FURTHER MEMOIRS OF  
THE WHIG PARTY 1807-1821  
WITH SOME MISCELLANEOUS  
REMINISCENCES

BY HENRY RICHARD VASSALL  
THIRD LORD HOLLAND

EDITED BY LORD STAVORDALE

WITH PORTRAITS

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## PREFACE

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*Hoc libro habes, ne sperne, quod restat mei.*

WITH these words, written on the bottom of one of the boxes containing the MSS., Lord Holland bequeaths to posterity this Memoir of his times. Whatever may be the verdict of those who peruse these pages and that portion of the work which has already been published, it is at least desirable that this expression of Lord Holland's political feelings and actions should be placed in the hands of the public. The Memoirs were written expressly for publication, and it is a pressing duty towards him to rescue the result of his labours from the dusty shelves where they have long lain unheeded and forgotten.

Fifty years have now elapsed since the appearance of the last published volume of the work which these pages will complete. About ten years after his father's death, Henry Edward, fourth and last Lord Holland, took in hand the publication of the Memoirs. The *Foreign Reminiscences* appeared in 1851, the first volume of the *Memoirs of the Whig Party* in 1852, and the second volume in 1854. It is impossible to explain why Lord Holland paused before the completion of his task. Possibly at a future date some document among the wealth of letters stored at Holland House may throw light on what is at present shrouded in



mystery. The point, however, is of slight importance ; and in all probability the state of Lord Holland's health during the last few years of his life (for he died in 1859) will amply account for the postponement of the undertaking.

The four books or chapters under consideration deal with the period of English history between 1807 and 1821—years fraught with interest for the student and lover of history. Full details are given of the Prince Regent's negotiations with the Whigs in 1809 and 1812, and a rapid sketch of the principal events and incidents of the last decade of George III.'s reign. Lord Holland, however, distinctly states that the aim and object of his labours were to record any incidents, anecdotes, or intrigues which were not generally known at the time, and which were unlikely to be found in the recognised histories, periodicals, or journals.

With these political notes we have incorporated a chapter called by the author his "Miscellaneous Reminiscences," a series of anecdotes and recollections of the various literary celebrities and scientists of note with whom he had chanced to become acquainted.

No one was better qualified than Lord Holland to relate the political occurrences of these fifteen years. He was recognised as one of the prominent leaders of the party after his uncle Charles James Fox's death ; and by his intimate connection with him was brought in contact with many persons of note, who were finishing their destined span of life when he had barely entered the age of manhood.

Henry Richard, third Lord Holland, was born in 1773 at Winterslow, near Salisbury. Before he was two months old, he narrowly escaped death in the

burning of the house, and was only snatched from the fire by the heroism of his mother. His father, Stephen Fox, eldest son of Henry Fox, the Paymaster, who was raised to the peerage in 1763 and died in 1774, lived but six months after his accession to the title. His mother, who was a daughter of John, first Earl of Upper Ossory, and Evelyn, daughter of John, Earl Gower, survived her husband by four years. The boy was left to the care of his uncles, Lord Upper Ossory and Charles James Fox, and was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. On leaving the University in 1792, he went abroad, and was absent from England, with the exception of two or three fleeting visits, until 1796. Part of those years were spent in Spain, and from this period dates his love of the literature and art of that country of romance, and his interest in the political condition of its people. Lord Holland passed the greater portion of the remainder of those years in France and Italy. While travelling in the latter country with his friend Lord Wycombe (afterwards second Lord Lansdowne) in 1795, he met Elizabeth, Lady Webster, wife of Sir Godfrey Webster, of Battle Abbey, in Sussex. The chance meeting was destined to alter the whole course of their lives. They became deeply attached to one another, and after many months spent in various parts of the Continent, returned to England together in 1796. Sir Godfrey obtained a divorce in July, 1797, and Lord Holland married her two days later. One son was born before the marriage, afterwards known as General Charles Fox and the husband of Lady Mary Fitzclarence, daughter of William IV. and Mrs. Jordan.

Lady Holland, who was a daughter of Richard Vassall and Mary, daughter of Thomas Clark, of New

York, who afterwards became Lady Affleck, succeeded to large properties in Jamaica after the death of her father in 1795. The greater portion of her income was made over to Sir Godfrey Webster at the time of her divorce. On his death in 1800, Lady Holland regained her own, and she and Lord Holland then took the additional name of Vassall.

Lord Holland's political career commenced in 1798 with his speech in the House of Lords on the Assessed Taxes Bill, on which occasion he showed himself a worthy representative of his family. It was not long before he was recognised as the authorised exponent of his uncle's policy in the House of Lords. He could not, however, at once shake off his love of travel, which was shared by his wife. They were abroad for some months in 1800, and passed through France, although the two countries were still at war. After the Peace of Amiens, the Hollands again visited Paris, where they were joined by Mr. Fox. They were then received in audience by the First Consul. Indeed, the only times Lord Holland ever saw the great man, whose prowess and understanding he so revered, were during this stay in Paris. From thence the Hollands went on to Spain, and did not return to England till 1805.

Lord Holland received no office in Lord Grenville's Administration until after the death of his uncle. He then entered the Cabinet as Lord Privy Seal; but his tenure of the post was of short duration, as the Tory party returned to office early in 1807. For the next twenty-three years he remained in Opposition, and took a leading part in the counsels of the party during that period. In 1830 Lord Grey formed a Ministry, in which Lord Holland accepted the post of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster,



with a seat in the Cabinet. This he retained until his death in 1840, with the exception of the short interval in 1834-35, when his party were out of office. He was buried at Millbrook, in Bedfordshire, near Ampthill, which had been bequeathed to him by Lord Upper Ossory on his death in 1818. He left besides General Charles Fox, one son, Henry Edward, who succeeded to the title, and one daughter, Mary, who married Lord Lilford and died in 1891. Lady Holland survived him and died in 1845.

For some years before his death Lord Holland's health was a source of much anxiety to his friends. Constant attacks of gout had sapped his strength, and he became, at times, little more than a cripple. These afflictions, however, had no power to cloud his natural good-humour, or subdue that buoyancy of spirits which made his society so sought after by his acquaintances. His classical education, his fund of universal knowledge, his retentive memory, and store of anecdotes, all combined to increase the inimitable charm of his conversation. It would be impossible in a few words to do justice to that noble character, beloved by all with whom he came in contact. It would be easy to descant on his good nature and benevolence, the simplicity and happiness of his domestic life, his artistic and literary tastes, and his desire to alleviate the sufferings of his fellow creatures. But it is rather to his political views and surroundings that we must devote our short remaining space.

Lord Holland held an intermediate position between the Ultra-Whig or Radical section of the party, and the more moderate portion—the followers of Lord Grenville—whose sentiments differed but little from the avowed policy of many individual members of

the Tory Government. He was unwilling to go the length desired by the extremists, whose ideal was the French Revolution and the changes consequent on it. Possibly had he seen a way to effect a sweeping alteration in the forms of British government by a gradual and orderly process, he would have countenanced the change from regal power to a constitution based on democratic principles. Certainly the word Monarchy was no fetish in his eyes, and his dislike to that recognised form of government was increased by the refusal of George III. and his successor to deal with the Roman Catholic question. But any form of excess was to him a thing unspeakable, and, as every important revolutionary movement in his time was attended by an outbreak of popular frenzy, his sentiments of humanity overcame the desire for fundamental change.

In truth, the aim and object of Lord Holland's political career was universal toleration, combined with a recognition of the legitimate rights of mankind. His unwavering support was consistently given to every motion which tended to relieve the oppressed and assist the persecuted. The Abolition of the Slave Trade, Improvements of the Penal Code, Religious Toleration, and Catholic Emancipation were each one step further towards the attainment of his ends.

His efforts in the House of Lords were seldom crowned with the success they deserved. The Whig peers were but few in number, and their divergent views on the great questions of the day rendered any combined action difficult. Lord Holland held very strong views on the duties of any public character, and was, in consequence, led to take action on occasions when he knew that no effective result could be obtained. In speeches and protests in the Journals of the House

he strove to place on record the principles of the party, and to impress on his friends the necessity of further exertions at some future and more appropriate moment. His speeches were replete with valuable information, and form important evidence of the varied resources of his mind. His arguments were clear and weighty ; his reasoning relevant and sound. If his delivery was halting, and his diction at times somewhat confused, it was from wealth, not from poverty, of words and matter that he suffered. Lord Brougham tells us that on occasions his speeches reached nearly to the level of his uncle's in excellence. Certainly, like Mr. Fox, he shone as a debater ; and this is not the less remarkable from the fact that he had never received the assistance and training of the House of Commons to develop his powers.

The Memoir was written to serve as a record of the internal history of the Whig party, and as such Lord Holland stated his case from a Whig point of view. Political feeling at the beginning of the nineteenth century was far more virulent than in the present day. The line between the opposing parties was much more strictly drawn : and it was but a few years before that the relations between the leaders of each side were limited to invectives hurled across the table of the House of Commons. Lord Holland tells us that this state of things was undergoing a gradual alteration in his time, and mentions " the difference which a change in the habits of society has insensibly wrought in political parties." As a politician he viewed this change with no very favourable eye, for he goes on to say : " The comparative disuse of men dinners, improving no doubt the intercourse of private life, has nevertheless very



sensibly impaired the strength and union of party zeal and connection."

The narrative compares very closely with other memoirs and histories of the time. More especially is the resemblance noticeable in the recently published *Creevey Papers*, for both are written from the same standpoint. The history of the negotiations of 1809 and 1812, and the dissensions which later arose in the Whig Party, are but two instances of particulars which correspond almost exactly in each account. In a few unimportant cases the author's memory has played him false, and these errors we have attempted to point out in our footnotes. But in all essential facts the relation is strictly in agreement with the established and recognised authorities on the period. Though written some years after the transactions referred to, most of the substance is collated from extensive notes, and if the authority is obscure or ground of reference uncertain, that doubt is definitely stated. Lord Holland, in a note to the earlier volumes of the work, lays great stress on the mention of the exact date at which each special passage was written, as tending to assist the elucidation of historical truths, and we have therefore been careful to retain these at the commencement of each chapter.

In dealing with the characters of individual statesmen and celebrities of the day, Lord Holland has in a few cases been led by his personal feelings to depart from his customary sense of justice. The chief sufferer in this respect is the Duke of Wellington, whose policy and actions are held up to opprobrium, often on scanty and insufficient grounds. His worst offence in Lord Holland's eyes seems to have been his conduct in Paris, and his failure to save Ney from execution; and from that time the



favourable opinion of him formed in the Peninsular War makes way for a deepening mistrust of his ulterior motives. Similarly his conception of George III.'s disposition and mental qualities is deeply coloured with the Whig prejudice; while the Regent obtains scant mercy at his hands, after his repudiation of his obligations to the party. In most instances, however, Lord Holland attempts to provide for his readers a fair and unbiassed estimate of the characters he delineates. In dealing with several of his political connections he finds himself obliged to pass censure on their aims and on incidents connected with their careers; but he does so with obvious reluctance, and tells us in Sheridan's case that he has done so, "from an apprehension that the false glitter thrown over the darker shades of his portrait might injure the truth of the more general picture of public men."

The Memoir has been published as it stands, with the exception of two or three short passages and notes, which were considered unnecessary. Two long letters dealing with the negotiations of 1812 have been omitted, as they are already published in the *Annual Register* for that year. An interesting conversation dealing with the *Junius* controversy has been added to the Appendix; for though no reference is made to the subject in the text, the paper was placed among the other manuscripts. Lord Holland's intentions were to extend his narrative over the period of the Whig return to power in 1830; but death cut short his labours and even prevented a revision of portions of the Memoir. The text is, therefore, occasionally somewhat confused, and words that have been inserted to supply the sense will be found in square [ ] brackets. These have also been used for the editorial notes to distinguish them from

Lord Holland's, which are signed with the initial letters of his usual signature, *Vassall Holland*.

At the commencement of each chapter has been placed a short sketch of the history of the period in question. These are intended solely for the use of readers who desire to be reminded of the outlines of events in England and on the Continent during those years. To understand certain portions of the narrative a clear and accurate knowledge of the times is needed, for it was written and intended for many whose own memories would carry them back to the days in which the events took place. Lapse of time has altered these conditions, and has rendered notes and explanatory paragraphs desirable, which were unnecessary when the earlier portions of the work were published.

STAVORDALE.

May, 1905.

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# LORD HOLLAND'S MEMOIRS OF THE WHIG PARTY

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## INTRODUCTION TO BOOK THE FIRST

THE second volume of Lord Holland's Memoirs, published in 1854, brings his account of the fortunes of the Whig party down to the autumn of 1807. That year had witnessed the resignation of the Ministry "of all the talents," after barely a year in office. George III.'s hostility to his Ministers throughout the period was patent to all observers; and he was nothing loth to accelerate their downfall on the question of Roman Catholic relief—a rock which had caused the wreck of other combinations in past years. Lord Holland, who took the office of Lord Privy Seal after Mr. Fox's death, fully relates the circumstances of their dismissal and the consequent General Election. The Tory party was re-established in office under the leadership of the Duke of Portland; but his colleagues were for the most part men of moderate and slender abilities, and their views on many of the burning questions of the day showed a lack of unanimity which foreboded ill for the success of the Administration. Yet

such is the uncertainty of political forecasts that the chief figures in this Cabinet were able to hold their own for the next twenty years, notwithstanding the strenuous and repeated efforts of the Whigs to supersede them. Lord Holland goes on to mention the election of Mr. George Ponsonby to the leadership of the Opposition in the House of Commons, and gives a short account of the chief incidents of the ensuing Session of Parliament.

On the Continent Napoleon was rapidly rising to the zenith of his power. The campaign of 1806 had crushed the Prussian armies, and that country lay at the mercy of the conqueror. The Berlin Decree had struck what he hoped was a death-blow to the commerce of England. Austria was neutral; and the French victories at Eylau and Friedland had indisposed Russia to continue the struggle single-handed. It is true that the King of Prussia and the Czar had only that year concluded a treaty pledging themselves to carry on the war, but the latter was secretly wavering, and was, besides, greatly incensed at the attitude of the English Government. On the accession of the Whigs to power, the recognised Tory policy of subsidies to the Allied Powers and the loan of troops was discontinued, and a system of small expeditions, such as those to the Dardanelles and Buenos Ayres, resorted to. Alexander, unable to comprehend the change of front occasioned by the system of party politics in England, looked on this reversal of pledges given to him as a personal slight,

and was not to be reconciled by renewed promises of assistance in 1807. A meeting was arranged between him and Napoleon at Tilsit, which resulted in the conclusion of a treaty of peace between France, Russia, and Prussia, and the formation of a secret alliance against Great Britain.

Early intelligence of the secret clauses of the treaty and the storm which was likely to break over Great Britain reached Canning, the Foreign Secretary, and drastic measures were at once resolved upon to meet the crisis. Napoleon had excluded English commerce from every Continental port, and it seemed probable that he would also make use of every vessel of war in them to further his schemes. Under these circumstances the English Cabinet resolved to obtain possession of any foreign fleets which it was possible to lay hands on, and thus diminish the number of ships which might be added to the fleets of France. In accordance with this policy an expedition was despatched against Copenhagen; the town was bombarded, the Danish fleet taken into English custody, and the Russian fleet denied access to the open sea by an English force stationed at the mouth of the Baltic. The same considerations gave rise to the expedition to Cadiz, where lay the remains of the Spanish and French fleet defeated at Trafalgar; and that to Lisbon. Portugal had nominally declared war against Great Britain in 1807 at the bidding of Napoleon; but the latter soon threw off the mask of friendship, and ordered Junot to invade and



subjugate the country. The House of Braganza thereupon decided to embark in their fleet for Brazil, and carried out this determination, leaving Lisbon in the hands of the French.

The covetous eye of the Emperor had been cast on Spain, and that country, not Portugal, was the real object of his machinations. By a trick he obtained possession of the persons of Charles IV. and Ferdinand his son, who had become King by the abdication of his father in March, 1808. They were forced to resign their right to the throne of Spain, and in June of the same year Joseph Bonaparte was proclaimed King. In the meanwhile the Spanish people rose in arms against the French, and the whole country was in a seething state of uproar. Delegates were sent from the various provinces to England, asking for assistance against the invader. This request was granted, and an expedition was despatched to the coast of Portugal. Junot was forced to evacuate that country by the terms of the Convention of Cintra; but the British operations in Spain were not attended with the same success. Sir John Moore, misled by false information, attempted to advance on Madrid, but found himself confronted by Napoleon himself, who had recently met and defeated the Spanish armies in detail. Immediate retreat became a necessity, and the campaign closed with Moore's death at Coruña and the successful re-embarkation of his troops.

The Emperor was unable to remain in Spain long



enough to see the result of his handiwork ; rumours of hostile preparations on the part of Austria caused him to return hurriedly to Paris. The truth was, that the checks experienced by the French at the hands of the Spanish troops had inspired fresh courage in the breasts of Austrian and Prussian statesmen, who began to perceive that the development of a national and patriotic spirit might be used with more success against the dreaded legions of France than intrigues and coalitions of Cabinets. Prussia made an abortive attempt to assert her independence, but it was rudely repressed, and Austria was left alone in her fight for freedom. War broke out in April, 1809 ; but though the Archduke Charles managed to defeat the French at Aspern, his immense losses minimised the result of his victory, and the hard-fought battle of Wagram two months later left the Austrian armies incapable of continuing the struggle. Reluctantly the Court of Vienna consented to a treaty of peace, which deprived the country of fifty thousand square miles of territory.

Two expeditions were despatched from England in 1809 : one to Sicily under Sir John Stewart, which met with no permanent success ; the other to Walcheren and the mouth of the Scheldt. The ulterior object of the latter enterprise was the destruction of the French fleet then building at Antwerp, and the conception that of Lord Castlereagh, the War Minister. Had the Cabinet sanctioned its despatch early in the year, when

Napoleon's fortunes were for the moment at a low ebb, it is probable that all would have been well. As it was, a bold and expeditious line of action would probably have accomplished all that was desired; but, on the contrary, sloth and inaction prevailed and doomed to complete failure the largest and most costly expedition which had ever, up to that period, left the shores of Great Britain.

The unpopularity of Lord Castlereagh with the public was increased by the ill-success of his scheme; and he discovered about the same time that his dismissal from office had been for some time determined on by his colleagues in the Cabinet headed by Canning. Believing that the latter was prompted by a desire for self-advancement, Castlereagh challenged him to a duel, and shot him through the thigh. Both Ministers resigned, and in the subsequent readjustment of places, Mr. Perceval became Prime Minister, with Lord Wellesley as Foreign Secretary and Lord Liverpool as Secretary for War.

Public opinion had been greatly excited early in the year by the accusations brought against the Duke of York of selling commissions in the Army through the instrumentality of his mistress, Mrs. Clarke. An investigation of the charge took place in the House of Commons, and it was proved that the Duke had no guilty knowledge of the proceedings. He thought right, however, to resign his office of Commander-in-Chief, which was given to Sir David Dundas.

Sir Arthur Wellesley, who had been appointed to

the supreme command in Portugal, invaded Spain in June, and advanced on Madrid. He received no information of Soult's presence on his flank; and though he signally defeated Marshal Victor at Talavera, was unable to maintain his position, and was forced to retreat on Portugal. During the winter he employed his time in forming the ring of fortifications round Lisbon known as the Lines of Torres Vedras, with the intention of retiring thither in case of necessity, after devastating the country and denying to the enemy any possibility of obtaining local supplies. Complete success attended his designs; and when Massena, who had arrived in Spain covered with glory won at the battles of Aspern and Wagram, followed the British into Portugal, he found it impossible to maintain his troops there, and retired from the country.

Napoleon found time after the Treaty of Vienna to turn his attention to more personal matters than the subjugation of nations. He divorced his wife, Josephine, and with the assistance of Metternich, the new Austrian Minister, prevailed on the Emperor Francis to give him his daughter, Marie Louise, in marriage. Austria was thus for some years bound to his cause; but Alexander, on the other hand, fell away and dissolved his connection with the Continental System. The Emperor continued his policy of the aggrandisement of France during 1810 by the annexation of the Papal States and Holland, and his dominion then reached its widest bounds,



## BOOK THE FIRST

1807—1810

N.B.—Copied in 1824. Written between December, 1817, and December, 1818.

IN the latter end of the Session of 1808 the public attention was diverted from domestic occurrences, and indeed from Parliament itself, to events on the Peninsula of Spain. They changed the aspect of affairs both at home and abroad, and led ultimately to those extraordinary revolutions by which the next seven years were distinguished. These notes are devoted to English politics, and however some documents and recollections within my reach might illustrate the history of Spain during that period, it is my intention to confine myself *here* to such occurrences as have immediate reference to our domestic parties. Some account, however, of the campaigns on the Peninsula is necessary, to explain the state of parties in England and the character and circumstances of those who took a part in them.

I have not hitherto adverted to the emigration of the Court of Lisbon to the Brazils, though it took place in November, 1807, and was much connected with English politics.<sup>1</sup> It was in truth so inter-

<sup>1</sup> [The ruler of Portugal at this time was Queen Maria I., who had succeeded her father King Joseph in 1777. She married her uncle Dom Pedro, who was proclaimed King conjointly with her. After the successive death of her husband and eldest son in 1788, she became insane, and the country was governed by her son Dom John, who was officially declared Regent in 1799.]



woven with the state in which our armies found that part of the Peninsula, that in relating the ensuing campaign I must have fallen into some repetition. The Portuguese Minister, the Chevalier d'Aranjo (who was all along suspected of promoting the designs of the French, and was certainly in secret correspondence with them, though possibly, and indeed probably, with the somewhat less criminal design of deceiving them), always assured me that the Prince Regent of Portugal would, as he was in policy bound to do, submit to almost anything to avoid a French invasion; but that whenever he despaired of averting that calamity, he would throw himself into the arms of the English, and emigrate to Rio Janeiro with all his family and Court, rather than hold a nominal and precarious authority under a French garrison in his own dominions. This previous view of the subject, not Lord Strangford's<sup>1</sup> negotiations, induced him to resort to that measure; and he was on board the ship before that Minister landed, and under weigh, if he had not actually crossed the bar, before he had any interview with the person who in a public dispatch strongly implies that his previous representations and promises, if not an audience on November 28 in Lisbon, had prevailed on him to embark.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Percy, sixth Viscount Strangford (1780—1855), Minister Plenipotentiary to the Portuguese Court.]

Early in November the Prince Regent of Portugal, alarmed by the threats of Napoleon, had issued a declaration detaining British subjects and property in Lisbon. Lord Strangford, after a final remonstrance, at once went on board the English fleet, which was under the command of Sir Sidney Smith. A rigorous blockade of the Tagus was enforced, but this state of affairs only lasted a few days. Intercourse with the Court was renewed, and Lord Strangford returned to Lisbon on the 27th.]

<sup>2</sup> My authorities for the facts related in the text are Sir Graham

Lord Strangford arrived in London with the news of the safe departure of the Court from the Tagus, before the official intelligence which he had sent by another ship reached the office. He had leisure during his voyage to improve the story he had invented, and he made the whole so dramatic that Mr. Canning, in the first fervour of gratitude, gave him a riband; promised him the appointment to Rio Janeiro; offered him an Irish earldom, which, as Mr. Canning expressed it, he had the *modesty* to refuse; and above all pressed him most earnestly to write a full account of the animating tale he had related in the shape of a dispatch, and to date it, "*Off the Tagus.*" He accordingly complied; and in observance of the rules of fiction which both as a poet and a politician he had studied and practised so successfully

Servetur ad imum  
Qualis ab incepto processerit,

he composed an epistle in Reddish's Hotel, St. James's Street, as true, or rather as false, as the date of it. It was published, while the ink of the original was yet wet, in the official Gazette of the country!<sup>1</sup> Mr. Canning must have been thunderstruck when he

Moore; \* Mr. Sitaro, a Portuguese merchant who victualled our fleets from Lisbon; Mr. Chamberlayne, then agent of packets at Lisbon, subsequently Consul at Rio Janeiro; and Mr. Bell, an English merchant, whose talents and intrepidity during the French occupation of Portugal should have entitled him to the place of Consul in 1809, but were found unequal to contend with the qualifications of Mr. Jeffrey,<sup>b</sup> a member of the House of Commons distinguished for his coarse calumnies and unfounded charges against Lord St. Vincent.—V. H.

\* [Admiral Sir Graham Moore (1764—1843), a younger brother of Sir John Moore. The commander of the English fleet which escorted the Portuguese Royal Family to the Brazils.]

<sup>b</sup> [M.P. for Poole. His attacks on Lord St. Vincent took place in 1805 and 1806.]

<sup>1</sup> [For Lord Holland's note on Lord Strangford's dispatch, see Appendix A.]

received the original dispatch, and discovered many variations in the second edition. He was, however, either too vain to acknowledge himself a dupe or too good-natured to expose the impostor. So far, therefore, from disavowing Lord Strangford, he appointed him Minister to Rio Janeiro, where, notwithstanding his detected falsehoods and other misconduct, he was continued for many years against the better judgment of his various employers, through the contrivances of the Portuguese Ambassador, Souza<sup>1</sup> (Count Funchal), and the interest of his relation and protector, the Duke of Northumberland. Mr. Brougham, who saw him frequently, did not spare him in the *Morning Chronicle*; indeed, he dwelt so much on the subject that I intimated to him and to Mr. Perry, the proprietor, that it was growing tiresome. Whether by the contrivance of Mr. Brougham to avenge himself of this criticism, or by pure accident, I know not, but certain it is that Lord Strangford has always imputed those just but severe strictures on his conduct to me, and with exquisite judgment complained to Mr. Brougham, the real author, of the malignity and inveteracy with which they were penned.

To return, however, to my narrative. Some regiments, detached from Sicily to co-operate with a squadron for compelling the Portuguese and Russian fleets on the Tagus to surrender in case the Prince of Brazil had not determined to sail for America, were on the coast; an expedition, which I have already adverted to as prepared during our Ministry, was at Cork<sup>2</sup>; and a small army, sent to the King of

<sup>1</sup> [Domingo Antonio de Souza-Continho, Marquis de Funchal (1765—1832), Portuguese Ambassador in England.]

<sup>2</sup> [An expedition against Mexico. See *Memoirs of the Whig Party*, vol. ii. p. 117.]



Sweden under the command of Sir John Moore, was released from that service by the dis-agreements which occurred between that King and the English general. All these forces were ready to act when the intelligence of the revolution in Spain reached England.<sup>1</sup>

It was brought thither at the end of May, or beginning of June, 1808, from the Asturias by Matarosa and Don Andres de la Vega: the first, a young nobleman afterwards better known by the name of Count Torreno; the latter, a provincial lawyer, who united to considerable sagacity and unblemished integrity great sobriety of judgment and a character capable of inspiring and of feeling confidence. He afterwards laboured to counteract the effects of that suspicion which both in and out of Cortes was estranging the Spaniards from their allies; but he died of the yellow fever at Cadiz before he acquired all the fame he deserved, and before the healing qualities of his temper could be applied to the prevention of those calamities which the return of King Ferdinand so unexpectedly produced. His modest character and inferior rank, the extreme youth of Matarosa, and the comparative insignificance of the province of the Asturias, made our Government hesitate till the arrival of the Galician and Andalusian deputies, men not equal in capacity, but of higher rank by birth or station. Admiral Apodaca, though, in truth, selected to screen him from the resentment of the multitude for having signed a proclamation favourable to the French and not for any proof of zeal against them,

<sup>1</sup> [The detention of Prince Ferdinand at Bayonne, whither Charles IV. had fled, and the rapid concentration of French armies on Madrid had caused the latent fury of the Spanish people to reach boiling point. A riot took place on May 2 in Madrid, in which five hundred French and many Spaniards were slain; and this within a few days was the signal for risings in every province of the country.]



had a very prepossessing appearance, and a manner which announced more knowledge of the world and talents of business than he really possessed. These circumstances, and a confirmation of the simultaneous rising throughout Spain on St. Ferdinand's Day (May 25), determined our Government to afford all possible aid to the first popular resistance which the aggressions of Napoleon had encountered. Mr. Whitbread and some other Whigs, but especially that genuine though sober lover of freedom "wherever pleaded," Mr. Horner,<sup>1</sup> caught the flame which such a contest was likely to kindle in every generous breast. Lord Grey, while his first impressions were yet warm, wrote me word that had he been in office I should have been despatched to the insurgents without loss of time. Some of the Ministers were less sanguine than the public; and Lord Westmorland,<sup>2</sup> in a phrase characteristic of his feelings and taste, said, "The Spaniards had got into a d——d scrape, and if we did not look sharp they would drag us into it too."

Count Florida Blanca<sup>3</sup> and my amiable, philosophical friend, Don Gaspar Melchior de Jovellanos,<sup>4</sup> on acceding to the cause of the insurgents, wrote to me to convey the intelligence to our Government. I forwarded their respective letters, with a translation, to the Secretary of State's office, and a copy of my answers, in which I pointedly disclaimed all connection

<sup>1</sup> [Francis Horner, Esq. (1778—1817), a leading politician on the Whig side. One of the originators of the *Edinburgh Review*.]

<sup>2</sup> [John, tenth Earl of Westmorland (1759—1841), Lord Privy Seal.]

<sup>3</sup> [Florida Blanca (1728—1808), Spanish statesman. He was head of the Government from 1777 to 1791, when he was dismissed by Charles IV. and thrown into prison.]

<sup>4</sup> [Don Gaspar Melchior de Jovellanos (1744—1811), Spanish statesman and author.]

or influence with any Ministry, but expressed my private conviction that every Englishman in or out of our Councils would be forward in assisting Spain in so arduous and so honourable a struggle. I observed that Mr. Canning took very slight notice of these communications, which, considering the character and station of the writers, were not unimportant. I have since ascertained that he took umbrage at my writing to the Under-Secretary of State and not to himself, which I did from an unwillingness to give my correspondence too great an air of importance or an appearance of obtruding either inquiry or opinion of mine on the Government.

On my applying soon afterwards for a passport to travel in Spain, he wrote me a letter of misplaced admonition; which I answered in a way to show him that I should regulate myself by my own notions of propriety without considering his, and that I did not conceive a Secretary of State, in granting a passport to an English gentleman, had any authority or occasion to read him a lecture as to his intercourse with foreigners. This little incident and other traits which occurred at the same time were indications of that personal vanity and flippancy which have often obstructed his ambitious designs by raising him enemies most unnecessarily, and which are the real defects of his character rather than weaknesses of a baser nature at that time very generally, but at all times very falsely, imputed to him. In our party Lord Grenville, swayed by Mr. Wickham,<sup>1</sup> who deemed French armies invincible, and Mr. Brougham,

<sup>1</sup> [William Wickham (1761—1840). His activity as British Minister in Switzerland caused the French Directory to demand his expulsion in 1798. He was a member of the Treasury Board under Lord Grenville, 1806—1807.]

who had written himself into a persuasion that everything which postponed peace must terminate in disaster, took in the course of the summer a very despondent view of the contest on the Peninsula; but the Duke of Norfolk was the only man who in 1808 publicly deprecated the policy of assisting the Spaniards. The Convention of Cintra, the retreat of Sir John Moore, the defeat and the dispersion of the Spanish armies, and the arguments in the *Edinburgh Review*, converted many to the same opinion in the course of a few months. Even Mr. Windham, with all his ardour for war and hatred of the French, was at moments startled at the apparition of liberty which the patriots occasionally summoned to their aid, and at a subsequent period was scared at the notion of resisting Napoleon himself by anything approaching to democratical principles.

The troops I have described above<sup>1</sup> were employed in the first instance and in the absence of Sir John Moore, who was personally detained some time in Sweden, to rescue Portugal from the French. They were placed for that purpose under the command of Sir Arthur Wellesley. The King disapproved of entrusting so important an expedition to a General so low in the list. He insisted on some older officer superseding him if the force were augmented. These objections of His Majesty led to the appointments of Sir Hew Dalrymple and Sir Harry Burrard, which occasioned no little confusion. The brilliant battle of Vimiero and the Convention of Cintra,<sup>2</sup> which, though it sacrificed some advantages, at least liberated

<sup>1</sup> [See *ante*, p. 11.]

<sup>2</sup> [The lenient terms of the Convention were generally condemned in England, and were even referred to with disapprobation in the King's Speech at the commencement of the following Session, (January 19, 1809).]



the west coast of the Peninsula from all French armies, are all matters of history.

The circumstances relating to them were well sifted at the time, and I know of no private or unpublished fact which would further illustrate them. The success in Portugal, however incomplete, was considered by all as necessarily the forerunner of some more extensive undertaking, but the Generals there employed were for different reasons incapacitated from the command of any immediate and greater expedition. The appointment of a commander became the subject of much public speculation and anxiety, and no doubt of as much secret deliberation and private intrigue. The popular writers affected to apprehend that the Duke of York was destined by Court favour to that important service. It is indeed probable that his father countenanced such pretensions ; and till the subsequent career of Sir Arthur Wellesley enabled him without self-disparagement to acquiesce in any appointment founded on a series of triumphs, it is natural to suppose that a Prince of the Blood at the head of the army was somewhat unwilling to admit his failures to be disqualifications for a command to which no rival could aspire on the plea of any splendid or popular success. The public, and the Ministry perhaps, thought otherwise. Cobbett and other writers employed their memory and their wit to expose his incapacity in the field ; and a pamphlet, written in a mysterious tone of insinuation and menace, prepared a way for the charges which were afterwards preferred against him. It proceeded from a cabal, with which some persons in the Duke of Kent's family were reported to have a connection. Ministers possibly were not displeased at having it in their power to plead the existence of popular clamour and prejudice against an appoint-



ment, which for many stronger but less courtly reasons they wished to avoid. But Sir John Moore, the only person whom they could venture to recommend to so extensive and important a command, never enjoyed their confidence either before or after his appointment.<sup>1</sup> His support at home in case of misfortune must have appeared to him precarious, and he assumed the command in a temper of distrust very natural, and in some views laudable, but not very propitious to the success of a cause depending more upon passion than calculation, nor encouraging to a people whose main resource consisted in an inward and rooted persuasion that they were invincible.

With great and very unusual qualities of understanding and disposition, Sir John Moore was perhaps less adapted to the command to which he was appointed than to any other to which his destiny could have called him. He was, indeed, the most accomplished soldier in our army. He united firmness, knowledge, and sagacity, to great military skill and zeal for his profession and his country. He had shown decision of character in the field of action, and never betrayed any want of it in such commands

<sup>1</sup> [Sir William Napier states that Moore obtained the command owing to the goodwill of the King, and that a few months before the Ministers had attempted to drive him into private life. Their hostility was fostered by Canning, whose friend Drummond, the British envoy at Palermo, Moore had thwarted when in command of the troops in Sicily. Sir John Moore wrote at this period in his Diary, edited by Major-General Sir J. F. Maurice (vol. ii. p. 250): "I understand that several of the Cabinet have taken a personal dislike to me, though I have seldom seen them, and they can know nothing of me. They wish to hold up Sir Arthur Wellesley. . . . Though they were forced to approve what I had done in Sweden, yet it was against the grain, for I took no trouble to conceal the ignorance which had sent us there, when they should have known from the character of the King and the weakness of his force that it was impossible for anything to be done."]

as he had been entrusted with. Nor was this all. The attachment of numerous, and among them the most sensible, officers in the army, and the veneration in which his memory was held by them even after his disaster and death, cannot be accounted for by the active praise of his relations and countrymen,<sup>1</sup> but prove that he really possessed those virtues which confer on a commander an authority over the opinions and wishes as well as the actions of his followers. But as he could not feel, so neither could he inspire, confidence in any but a regular force. His affections were limited to British officers, and he was either unwilling or unable to court the goodwill or humour the weaknesses of any other. His high spirit would not stoop to countenance either absurdity or exaggeration; he disdained, perhaps he undervalued, the advantages which, in a moment of national ferment, some extravagance of hopes and even of expressions may produce.<sup>2</sup> He knew the superiority of English troops over the undisciplined and ill-officered bands of their allies; and if not childishly complacent in displaying, he was at least at no pains to conceal, his sentiments on that subject.

He could not rely on the statements or depend on the skill of the Spaniards with whom he came in contact, and he soon let them know that he had made that discovery. Anxious not to forfeit his military reputation, he probably expressed less ardour in the cause than he evinced apprehension of reproach should he risk the safety of so large a British force; and the tone of circumspection and diffidence at headquarters

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Moore was a Scotchman.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [Sir H. E. Bunbury, in his *Narrative*, says of him: "His manner was singularly agreeable to those whom he liked, but to those whom he did not esteem his bearing was severe."]

spread through the army, and tended, no doubt, to produce in some degree that backwardness to co-operate with them in the natives, which he quotes so often in his notes and correspondence as a proof of their want of enthusiasm. In the last and most important epoch of his life he put himself in the right in all his differences with others; but it is observable that, though in the right, he did always differ with those whose co-operation and concert were most necessary to his success.

Before he took the command of the army, Ministers should have sent him to the Spanish Governments then forming, or should have selected at his recommendation some military man with whom he was in the habits of confidence. The choice, however, fell on my friend, Mr. Frere,<sup>1</sup> a man of a warm and generous disposition, of singular and original wit, and of great literary accomplishments, who was zealous in the cause of Spain. He had, it is true, contributed to our rupture with that country in 1804 and to the scandalous capture of the frigates; but his personal quarrel with the Prince of the Peace<sup>2</sup> might well be expected to atone for all such offences, in the eyes of a nation irritated even to madness against that favourite. His anti-Gallican spirit, too, somewhat extravagant elsewhere, was congenial with the feelings of Spaniards, and not unlikely to inspire them with confidence in him.

<sup>1</sup> [Right Hon. John Hookham Frere (1769—1846), diplomatist and author. Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1799—1800: Minister at Lisbon, 1800: and at Madrid, 1802. After his failure in Spain, he refused further employment, and devoted himself to literature. Frere, being an intimate friend of Canning, was not likely to regard Moore with favour or to make any great exertions on his behalf.]

<sup>2</sup> [Manuel de Godoy, Duke of Alcudia (1767—1851), favourite and Minister of Charles IV.]



These considerations and his intimacy with Mr. Canning were his recommendations. He had no other : with all his ardour, reading, talents, and humour, he was a bad man of business. His manners, repulsive at all times to new acquaintance, became yet more so when the importance of the affairs in which he was engaged rendered him absent and pompous. Thus distant to some and suspicious of all, he was often the dupe of low and designing men, and yet oftener of his own imagination. He had no knowledge of men's characters, and even when he adopted their ideas and approved of their conduct, was neither communicative nor cordial in his official intercourse with them. His habitual absence assumed, when he was in a public capacity, the appearance of haughty demeanour and self-sufficiency ; and though entirely exempt from such vices, he preferred incurring the imputation of them to the acknowledgment of the more venial infirmities of inattention, indolence, or forgetfulness. In his correspondence with Sir John Moore he showed great want of judgment in collecting intelligence, was unaccountably remiss in conveying such as he did collect, and culpably presumptuous and offensive in the tone and substance of his advice and remonstrances.

The General, from the commencement, was disposed to remain on or near the frontiers of Portugal, and averse to any forward movement, especially after the discomfiture of Blake in Biscay and Castaños in Arragon. He wavered, however, either from want of accurate intelligence or from the earnest representations of Mr. Frere. By that irresolution some time was lost in forming his junction with Sir David Baird,<sup>1</sup> who had landed at Coruña ; and between the

<sup>1</sup> [General Sir David Baird (1757—1829), Sir John Moore's second-in-command.]

project of retreating by Portugal or Galicia the necessary preparations were completed in neither. When it was determined to retreat through Galicia, Admiral de Courcy, who commanded at Coruña, was directed to prepare the transports at that port *or* at Vigo, according to his judgment as to which port was most favourable for the embarkation of troops in the face of an enemy. On that subject no seaman could doubt. Ships can anchor in Vigo Bay beyond the reach of cannon, and, even if driven from thence, the islands at the mouth of the harbour afford water for an army and a road with tolerable anchorage for a fleet, where they could lie for a favourable wind in safety from any attack but such as supposes a superiority at sea in the enemy.

Thither, therefore, most of the transports were sent early in December, 1808, and there Sir Samuel Hood, detached with a large squadron of men-of-war, found them. While they lay there, that is, for more than a month, the wind continued from the eastward, and would have rendered it difficult and tedious for them to beat up to Coruña. Sir John Moore, before he left Lugo on January 9, sent orders to Vigo to bring the transports to Coruña, but the messenger lost the dispatch and arrived without it. Captain Capel,<sup>1</sup> however, on the 13th or 14th, received another and private letter from the army. There was a hasty note on the cover, written, I think, in pencil, and nearly obliterated by the carriage and damp weather. It mentioned the orders to retreat on Coruña, and after some consultation Sir Samuel Hood inferred

<sup>1</sup> Honble. Bladen Capel, who commanded the *Endymion*. The account in the text was given me by Captain Basil Hall, then a midshipman in that ship, and confirmed by Capel himself.—V.H.)

[Afterwards Admiral Sir Thomas Bladen Capel, K.C.B. (1776—1853), youngest son of William Anne, fourth Earl of Essex.]

from it that the lost dispatch must have contained orders to sail from that port. The wind, as if to favour that design, suddenly changed to the south and south-west. It blew fresh, but the whole fleet weighed anchor, put to sea, and actually entered the Bay of Coruña on the evening of the 15th, with a stiff breeze which, both from its strength and direction, would have impeded, if not prevented, its sailing out of the same bay in the face of an enemy.

Sir John Moore had been there four days, and the French army had come up to him more than forty-eight hours before the transports arrived. Had the wind that brought them continued, they would scarcely have improved the prospects of the English army. But during the night of the 15th and the ensuing day, while the battle was yet fighting, it came round more and more to the eastward, and was so favourable in the afternoon that the greater part of the troops, though in considerable confusion, were not only on board, but actually at sea the very night of the action, which did not commence till about midday on the 16th. The General, who, after a painful campaign, had fallen as it closed, was "buried sadly" at dead of night, and left, as the melancholy dirge expresses it, "to his glory": which, however, is not only commemorated in that very beautiful composition, and in the Latin inscription written by Dr. Parr on his monument at Coruña, but must live in the recollection of the English army, and be preserved by every impartial historian of the time.

The particulars I have related prove, indeed, that the transports should either never have been sent to Vigo, or the retreat should have been made upon that place; not perhaps from Lugo, but from Astorga by Orense and Tuy. The country through which



that road lies is comparatively fertile, and it had been less exhausted by the recent passage of troops. The roads are less practicable, and the cannon of both the flying and pursuing armies must have been left behind. But Vigo is a port admirably adapted for the embarkation of troops. The preference given to Coruña, which nothing but the most signal good fortune prevented from being fatal to fleet and army, and the irresolution between November 16 and December 5, seem the only mistakes that military critics can discover in the unfortunate but arduous campaign of Sir John Moore. The vagueness, inaccuracy, and contradictions of the intelligence he received sufficiently account for the latter. It was, in truth, more extraordinary that he was not led into yet greater embarrassments, than that he incurred inconveniences from the expectations held out to him by the Spaniards, the sudden dispersion of all their armies, and the contradictory statements by which it was attempted to conceal the extent, nature, and consequences of those disasters.

A transcendent genius would, I think, have done more than this great officer accomplished; but very few would have displayed more firmness or so much sagacity. Less of either of those qualities would have betrayed him into a situation which, without serving the cause of Spain, must have terminated in the surrender or annihilation of the English army. His view of affairs appeared at the time to some, and among them to myself, to be dictated by an unwarrantable indifference in the cause and an excess of circumspection, amounting to timidity, in council. But subsequent disclosures prove such circumspection to have been necessary. It reflects honour on his discernment, without in the smallest tittle detracting from

his zeal in the service of his country. He formed a just estimate of the effects of his advance; it exposed his army to be attacked and almost surrounded by superior numbers, but by bringing the whole disposable French force northwards, it gave the Spaniards a chance, and deferred the invasion of the Andalusias. In his last melancholy letter, written three days before his death, he seems to repent of having departed from his original determination of retreating from Salamanca through Portugal.<sup>1</sup> But the movement which he regrets saved Spain, though it did so, perhaps, chiefly in consequence of the Austrian war, of which he was not apprised.<sup>2</sup> Seville and Cadiz would have inevitably fallen had the French corps pressed forward through Estremadura and La Mancha. They were recalled on the alarm of Sir John Moore's advance into Old Castile. It was consequently some time before the French could resume offensive operations in the south. The hostility of the peasantry and the increase of the irregular bands or guerillas harassed their communications, when their armies were spread over so large a surface.

<sup>1</sup> [This letter, dated January 13, 1809, was written to Lord Castlereagh (*Castlereagh Correspondence*, vii. 26). The passage referred to in the text is as follows: "Your lordship knows that had I followed my own opinion as a military man, I should have retired with the army from Salamanca. The Spanish armies were then beaten. I was sensible, however, that had the British been withdrawn, the loss of the cause would have been imputed to their retreat. It was for this reason that I made the march to Sagunhan. As a diversion it succeeded: I brought the whole disposable force of the French against this army, and it has been allowed to follow it without a single movement being made to favour my retreat."]

<sup>2</sup> [The Austrians made no actual move against France till March, 1809, but the intelligence of their activity caused Napoleon's departure from Spain. He must, however, probably have realised, judging from an order issued when he was about to leave the army, that the escape of Moore and his force was ultimately certain.]

Numerous though not very formidable armies were collected by the Spaniards in the south, and that sanguine officer, Sir Robert Wilson,<sup>1</sup> with a miserable band of ragamuffins called the "Lusitanian Legion," contrived, by threatening proclamations, letters purposely thrown in the way of the enemy, and other devices, to preserve Ciudad Rodrigo from attack and to keep on the alert a French force considerable enough to have taken that fortress and made a fatal inroad on Portugal itself. He remained where he was, in spite of the orders of Sir John Cradock<sup>2</sup> and the remonstrances of almost every English officer with whom he communicated. The value of this service can only be estimated by those who were in the country at the time. Such was the consternation at Lisbon that his retreat would have been the signal for embarking every British soldier in that capital or its neighbourhood.

The result of this campaign produced disappointment and dismay in England. Sir John Moore was in habits and opinions more connected with the Whigs than with their opponents. He was sincerely lamented by that party; and in vindicating his memory, sometimes from reasonable criticism, at others from malevolent aspersions, many members of it were hurried into disparaging a cause in which they thought he had been sacrificed by Ministers. Mr. Canning was compelled to give up his friend Mr. Frere in debate. He did so with much emotion in manner, but without assigning those reasons in his defence which might have been urged with truth,

<sup>1</sup> [General Sir Robert Wilson (1777—1849), author of the *History of the British Expedition to Egypt*. He was dismissed from the army for a supposed participation in a riot on the occasion of Queen Caroline's funeral, but was reinstated in 1830.]

<sup>2</sup> [Commander-in-Chief in Portugal for a few months.]



though probably with little public effect. He was recalled, and Lord Wellesley appointed Ambassador to Spain. Mr. Frere, though mortified, loitered on at Seville, accepted a title from the Junta, which he was permitted by our Court to bear anywhere *out of England*,<sup>1</sup> and would not have quitted Spain if the progress of the French had not driven him to the coast.

I was in Spain during the whole Session of 1809, and was fortunate in being so. All minds in England were engrossed with the inquiry into the conduct of the Duke of York and the examination, among other bad characters, of his mistress, Mrs. Clarke. It was a disgusting business, and I am unacquainted with the details. The intemperate defiance to which Mr. Charles Yorke and the Ministers resorted, his own sanguine temper and hasty assertion of a negative proposition, and, I am afraid I must add, the injudicious management of Mr. Adam,<sup>2</sup> both before and during the investigation, combined with the unpopularity which an apprehension of his commanding an expedition had produced, were the leading causes of a result unfavourable to the Commander-in-Chief. His case, though exempt from moral turpitude, legal guilt, or dishonourable feeling, was yet indefensible in public. He was compelled to resign. Sir David Dundas,<sup>3</sup> who succeeded him, was considered, how truly I know not, as his creature: and the Army was thought to be as much under his direction, through the connivance of the King and the subserviency of that General after his removal, as before.

<sup>1</sup> [He was created Marquis de la Union, an appellation curiously unsuited to his record in Spain.]

<sup>2</sup> [William Adam (1751—1839), at this time Attorney-General to the Prince of Wales and trustee to the Duke of York in certain private matters.]

<sup>3</sup> [Sir David Dundas (1735—1820), Commander-in-Chief, 1809—1811.]

The accusation originated in a cabal of disappointed and malignant men, among whom were to be found Captain Dodd, aide-de-camp to the Duke of Kent, and Mr. Glennie, an officer of Engineers, formerly treated with some harshness by the Duke of Richmond. They availed themselves of disclosures, true and false, made to them in moments of passion by a Mrs. Clarke, a mistress discarded by the Duke of York and defrauded of the annuity to which a direct promise had entitled her. The woman, however, acted more from interest and vanity than malignity or revenge. She was at first averse to any public exposure of His Royal Highness, and only desirous to extort the money which she thought her due, and which, in honour as well as policy, ought never to have been withheld. Irritated afterwards by the taunts of the Duke's advisers and partisans, and tickled by the success of her personal charms and flippant repartees in the House of Commons, she ransacked her memory for every private transaction and confidential conversation on the subject of promotions, and related them, with great apparent accuracy and perspicuity and without asperity or exaggeration, to the public.

All the popular writers, Tory as well as Whig, Methodist as well as Jacobin, joined in representing the testimony as conclusive of corruption. The country was in a flame. There had never hitherto (at least in our time) been any measure hostile to the Court so popular as the inquiry and censure of the Duke of York. Colonel Wardle, who conducted it, of mean capacity and meaner disposition, was remarkable for nothing but the atrocities he had perpetrated and encouraged against the Irish insurgents in 1797; he was a party to the designs and a tool in the hands

of that little knot of discontented officers with whom the proceeding originated.<sup>1</sup> Other members in pursuit of popularity were led into too much co-operation with them ; and Lord Folkestone,<sup>2</sup> a man of integrity, honour, and understanding, perhaps the most formidable of the Duke's opponents, got so much entangled in an amour with Mrs. Clarke, that he might have made allowance for weaknesses of which he found himself, even at the moment of arraigning them, very susceptible.

Many Whigs, though they disdained all connection with such associates as Colonel Wardle and Mrs. Clarke, thought they were not bound to show much forbearance towards one who abhorred their principles and had sapped their power ; much less to incur the offence and odium of screening what, if not delinquency, was at least impropriety of conduct, for the sake of riveting in authority a Prince who would never exert it in their favour. "We have for once," said Lord Althorp,<sup>3</sup> a spirited young man, keen in sport and in politics, "the people in full cry against the Court, and we are fools if we do not ride up to the hounds." The older and more sober members of the party, especially the Cavendishes and those who recollected the Duke of York's good qualities

<sup>1</sup> [Mr. Creevey writes in his diary, dated, November 12, 1809 : "I meet Abercromby in my walk. . . . When I tell him Wardle is on his legs again, all he can say is, 'Wardle is the agent of the Duke of Kent.' Was there ever such nonsense ?" (*Creevey Papers*, vol. i. p. 113). Creevey seems, however, to have been a personal friend of Colonel Wardle. "I can't bring myself to think there is anything bad in him, and I have looked at him in all ways in order to be sure of him. I know he is in distress for money, but all men from his part of the country dine with him and speak well of him."]

<sup>2</sup> [William, afterwards third Earl of Radnor (1779—1869).]

<sup>3</sup> [John Charles, Viscount Althorp (1782—1845), who succeeded his father as Earl Spencer in 1834 ; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1830—1834.]



when they agreed with him on politics in 1788, were inclined to adopt a more magnanimous but less popular policy; but the Whigs as a body took no distinct or manly tone whatever on this embarrassing occasion. The different sides they espoused proved that no leader had any authority over them, and perhaps the violence of some and the irresolution of others proved as clearly that not one of them had the qualities requisite to assume it. Mr. Ponsonby<sup>1</sup> sunk in the estimation of the party, and the party sunk yet more in the estimation of the public.

During the remainder of the Session many motions were brought forward with a view of courting popularity or allaying the ferment of men's minds. Ministers were arraigned by name for interfering with elections and other corrupt practices; bills for abolishing sinecures, reducing pensions, and reforming Parliament were announced, and one with many alterations by the Ministry for the further prevention of bribery was passed, though with little benefit to the public. On the whole these discussions did harm. The exaggeration of the reformers, on one side, and the scandalous admission and defence of many practices grossly improper, on the other, lowered the House of Commons without strengthening the people, and thereby weakened the only weapon which can be used with any efficacy against the silent but steady encroachments of Regal and Ministerial power.

During this period Ministers were not united. The shrewd among their opponents perceived both in

<sup>1</sup> [Right Hon. George Ponsonby (1755—1817), son of John Ponsonby, Esq. He distinguished himself in the Irish Parliament, and was made Lord Chancellor of Ireland in 1806. He was leader of the Whigs in the House of Commons from 1808 until his death in 1817, which resulted from a stroke of paralysis in the House.]

their speeches and their measures strange symptoms of difference, if not disunion. The fatal expedition to Walcheren was evidently adopted as a compromise, but in its consequences widened and proclaimed the breach. Lord Castlereagh was not consulted by his colleague, Mr. Canning, on the affairs of Spain, and a diversion in the north of Europe, strongly urged by the Austrians, was, in the shape of an expedition to Walcheren, resorted to as an expedient to prevent his interference with projects relating to the Peninsula, where the nature of his views was likely to create (and in one or two instances did actually create) considerable embarrassment. During the retreat of Sir John Moore he had sent a Sir George Smith with a small force to Cadiz, to secure by negotiation, and in certain cases by force, the Spanish squadron there.<sup>1</sup> That object was not, I suspect, even communicated to Mr. Canning; it was certainly mistaken and unknown by Mr. Frere, and when suspected by the Junta, pointedly and sincerely disclaimed by Mr. Frere. Whether right or wrong, a measure so offensive to the Spanish was inconsistent with all our professions, and not of a piece with any of the other transactions in that country. Sir Sidney Smith<sup>2</sup> likewise had received instructions in the Brazils from Lord Castlereagh, which justified him in adopting a

<sup>1</sup> [Sir William Napier states that the primary object of the expedition was to insure the safety of the town and Spanish fleet against any possibility of capture by the French. The negotiations finally fell through, owing to the wavering policy of the English Cabinet and the ill-judged diplomatic methods of Mr. Frere. The Supreme Junta refused to allow the British troops to enter the town, though the mob were clamouring for their admittance. After Sir George Smith's death the command devolved on General Mackenzie, who returned with the troops to Lisbon after all hope of a satisfactory arrangement was at an end.]

<sup>2</sup> [Sir Sidney Smith had been sent out to command the South American Station in 1808.]

line directly contrary to that which Lord Strangford, in obedience to Mr. Canning, was pursuing.

To prevent such conflicts of authority, it seems that the notable device of giving Lord Castlereagh some expedition entirely his own was hit upon.<sup>1</sup> The enterprise on the Scheldt originated with him at a time when so little cordiality subsisted between him and Mr. Canning, that the latter had applied to the Duke of Portland to remove him from his office, and declared that his continuance in it was incompatible with his own possession of the Foreign Seals. The removal of Lord Castlereagh had been agreed to, but was deferred on various pretences of the Duke of Portland and Lord Camden.

The expedition originated with a Minister thus circumstanced, and, as it were, secretly condemned by his colleagues. Lord Chatham<sup>2</sup> was entrusted

<sup>1</sup> [It is perhaps worthy of note that Lord Castlereagh's biographer, Sir Archibald Alison, treats the expedition to Walcheren as one of a number of important moves against Napoleon. He considers that the War Secretary's policy, unaltered throughout his tenure of office, was to break Napoleon's power of meeting Great Britain on the sea, and illustrates his view by the mention of the successive expeditions aimed at the destruction or capture of fleets belonging to European Powers in subjection to France—*viz.*, the bombardment of Copenhagen, the blockade of the Russian fleet in the Baltic, the expeditions to Lisbon and Cadiz, etc. Had Lord Castlereagh been able to persuade the Cabinet to undertake this expedition in 1808 instead of 1809, the destruction of the French fleet then building at Antwerp would have been assured. As it was, a daring and forward policy and a strict obedience to the original orders from home would have attained its object; but the incapacity and jealousy of the commanders gave Napoleon time to reinforce his garrisons, and doomed the British force to inactivity and disease in the swamps of the Scheldt.]

<sup>2</sup> [John, second Earl of Chatham (1756—1835). He held the posts of First Lord of the Admiralty, 1788—1794; Lord Privy Seal, 1794—1796; Lord President of the Council, 1796—1801; Master-General of the Ordnance, 1801—1806; Governor of Gibraltar, 1820—1835. Alison states that, "Lord Castlereagh was constrained by the highest influence to offer the command to the Earl of Chatham."]



with the command, at whose suggestion I know not. The appointment was certainly a strange and unfortunate one. His countenance and carriage, indeed, bespoke high spirit and genius, and such qualities might readily have been expected from the brother of Mr. Pitt and the son of Lord Chatham. But his life had hitherto belied all such appearances and expectations. He had never spoken in Parliament, and in the high offices he had filled had been remarkable for nothing but procrastination and inactivity. Alike insensible to the glories shed on his name by his father and the favours showered upon him by his brother, he sold the monument raised to the first Lord Chatham at Burton Pynsent<sup>1</sup> for a few pounds to a neighbouring apothecary; and he remained in office with Mr. Addington when all Mr. Pitt's personal friends retired with him in 1801. Injuries, real or supposed, made a deeper impression on his mind; he never forgave Lord Melville for urging his removal from the Admiralty in 1795, and he hardly excused his brother for complying with that suggestion, though his indolence in office had rendered it unavoidable and become so notorious that he was nicknamed by the Navy, from the hours he kept, *The Late Lord Chatham*. He had imperceptibly risen to be an old General in the Army; for, with the exception of the disastrous descent at the Helder in 1799, and possibly a part of the siege of Gibraltar, he had never seen any service,<sup>2</sup> and for more than

<sup>1</sup> [A monument was erected there by Lady Chatham, consisting of a marble urn, with a medallion by John Bacon. It is stated in the *Dictionary of National Biography* that the memorial was removed to Stowe, and is now at Revesby Abbey, Lincolnshire.]

<sup>2</sup> [He served in Canada on Sir Guy Carleton's staff from 1774 to March, 1776, when he was removed by his father from the army, owing to the continuance of the American War. He returned to the service two years later on the outbreak of war with France.]

twenty-five years had discharged no military duties whatever. Yet he now assumed the command of the largest expedition which ever left our coast with as much indifference as he had voted in Parliament and received the emoluments of the Admiralty, the Presidentship, or the Ordnance, during the last twenty-three years of his life.

The calamities of the expedition are matter for history. The Navy ascribed the failure to Lord Chatham; his conduct at the Admiralty was not forgotten by them, and Sir Home Popham,<sup>1</sup> who had instigated the expedition and devised many of the plans, was not sorry to shift the whole blame on the execution rather than the design. No exploit was performed sufficient to reconcile the public to so unexpected an appointment as that of Lord Chatham. When, however, he was examined in the House of Commons, the stateliness of his deportment, the firmness and compass of his voice, his self-possession, dignity, and dexterity, persuaded some who were no mean judges that the necessity of exertion would have discovered in him great parliamentary talents, though command in the field had drawn forth no display of military genius. He delivered clandestinely to the King a paper justifying himself, and in some degree inculcating the Navy, and even the Admiralty. Lord Mulgrave<sup>2</sup> repelled the charge in the House of Lords with spirit; but Lord Chatham, who was obliged to retire from his office, never opened his lips, but on his examination.

The expedition to Walcheren occasioned changes

<sup>1</sup> [Admiral Sir Home Popham (1762—1820). He had been attached to the Duke of York's army in Flanders in 1795, and had thus gained experience and local knowledge of its seaboard. In this expedition he commanded the *Venerable*, seventy-four guns.]

<sup>2</sup> [The newly appointed Master-General of the Ordnance.]

in France as well as in England. Napoleon was on the Danube. Fouché,<sup>1</sup> Minister of the Interior, on the first alarm of our descent on the coast of Holland, raised, without communicating the step to the Emperor, a large body of national guards. They were of some service at Antwerp; but the circumstance, together with a negotiation with Lord Wellesley soon afterwards for peace, which was carried on by an agent of Fouché without the participation of his colleagues or of the Emperor himself, gave Napoleon great umbrage.<sup>2</sup> He thought his Minister too powerful and too busy; and though his conduct on the invasion of Walcheren had been serviceable to France, it furnished a motive for dismissing him.

In England, Lord Castlereagh, mortified at the complete discomfiture of his favourite project, found that he had been all along sacrificed by his colleagues, and, partly from calculation, partly from anger, resigned. Mr. Canning had done so the day before, either because Lord Castlereagh had not been apprised of the intention of removing him, or because he had not been removed. The duel between these two Ministers, the challenge, correspondence, and circumstances which led to it, were all printed, published, and canvassed at the time. Lord Castlereagh, in his rage, sought a mode of redress not well suited to the injury, and perhaps he did not select the real

<sup>1</sup> [Joseph Fouché, Duke of Otranto (1763—1820), one of Napoleon's chief agents in the overthrow of the Directory. At this period Minister of Police and of the Interior.]

<sup>2</sup> The circumstances related in the text, which I committed to paper in 1817 or 1818, have been confirmed this year by the publication of Fouché's memoirs: the agent, I learnt from those memoirs, to be no other than Ouvrard.<sup>a</sup>—V.H.

<sup>a</sup> [Gabriel Julien Ouvrard (1770—1846), French financier.]



offender. For if the concealment, not the conception, of the design of removing him constituted the offence, with the Duke of Portland and Lord Camden, not Mr. Canning, rested the guilt of the concealment. Mr. Canning pressed them to disclose it; he possibly, and even probably, thought that they had disclosed it. The conduct of Lord Castlereagh, who was an excellent marksman, and had practised with pistols to qualify himself for the Irish House of Commons, seemed dictated by a thirst of vengeance rather than a sense of wounded honour.<sup>1</sup> "A gentleman," observed Mr. Windham, "does not fight to avenge his political wrongs, but to vindicate his character. Here is an injury, and possibly some duplicity, of which Lord Castlereagh has a right to complain; but there has been no aspersion on his reputation, no insult which demands reparation or satisfaction."

Nevertheless, the proof of spirit, where very unwarrantably none had hitherto been supposed to reside, raised the character of the man, and even softened the unpopularity he had incurred by the disastrous expedition to Walcheren.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, no explanation of Mr. Canning could do away the impression in the world that he had acted

<sup>1</sup> [A story is told in the *Memoirs of Sir Charles Napier*, on the authority of Lady Castlereagh, that Canning was willing to reinstate Castlereagh if he would give up Sir John Moore. Alison states the cause of the duel to have been the fact that Castlereagh detected, in the intrigue, a design of Canning for self-advancement and resented it accordingly.]

<sup>2</sup> Lord Grenville says, in a letter to me, October 17, 1809: "I really think, by dint of showing how ill he has been used, Castlereagh will begin to make himself regretted. It will be a singular conclusion of the business, if the compassion of the public should be excited in favour of the one Minister who was perhaps of them all the most unpopular."

Such was, however, the conclusion, and Lord Grenville turned out a prophet.—V.H.

unfairly and treacherously by his colleague. He sunk in the same proportion as his rival rose in public estimation, and particularly in the House of Commons. It was whimsically observed that the first two Irishmen that had ever sat together in an English *Cabinet* terminated their differences in the *field*.

The day after the duel Mr. Perceval wrote to Lord Grey and Lord Grenville, the former of whom was in Northumberland, the latter in Cornwall. His letter mentioned the intention of the Duke of Portland to resign in consequence of bad health, and stated His Majesty's authority to Lord Liverpool and himself to communicate with the two Lords, "for the purpose of forming an extended and combined Administration"; he then expressed his hopes that they would come to town to forward, with as little delay as possible, that important object, and apprise him of their arrival. He also mentioned Lord Castlereagh's and Mr. Secretary Canning's intentions of resigning.

Lord Grey construed this letter as containing *His Majesty's authority* to Mr. Perceval to communicate with him, and *Mr. Perceval's* hopes that he would come up to town and avoid loss of time in forwarding the object of forming a combined Administration. He therefore contented himself with declaring that such a union was impossible; and thinking his appearance in London might occasion delay in forming a settled Government, remained in the country, after requesting Mr. Perceval to lay before His Majesty his humble entreaties that His Majesty would not attribute his conduct to any want of attachment or diminished zeal in his service.

Lord Grenville, thinking that Mr. Perceval's letter contained an express signification of His Majesty's

pleasure that he should come up to London, left Cornwall; but immediately on his arrival at Camelford House wrote to Mr. Perceval to decline the proposed communication, from a conviction that it would be productive of no public advantage. He disclaimed in his letter all personal hostilities and all desire of prolonging political differences, and hinted at his opinions on the Catholic question, by declaring that it was "his wish and the duty of every loyal subject to compose, not enflame, the divisions of the Empire." "His accession to the Administration," he observed, "could not contribute to that object, and could only be considered as a dereliction of public principles. The retreat of some members from the Ministry made no difference; his objections not being to persons, but to the principles of the Government itself and the circumstances attending its appointment." He then closed the letter with the usual assurances of zeal and attachment to His Majesty.

Mr. Perceval, in a reply to Lord Grenville studiously polite and conciliatory, endeavoured to mark his sense of the different conduct of Lord Grey; and though that conduct arose from a different construction put by the two Lords on the phraseology of Mr. Perceval's first overture, there was some apprehension in Lord Grey's mind lest an inference of more substantial difference in their views might be drawn from it. Such a consequence was, however, entirely avoided. It happened fortunately enough that the conduct of each on this occasion seemed to refute the calumnies on their respective characters, which had of late been most sedulously propagated by their enemies. Lord Grenville, so often styled by the courtiers stiff, unbending, and repulsive, came up to town on the summons, though his purpose



was to decline the proffered negotiation. Lord Grey, on the contrary, who had most unaccountably been accused by the demagogues of an undue appetite for office, did not even wait to consult his friends, but, at the risk of offending the King, peremptorily and instantly declined all communication, and remained at the distance of three hundred miles. Their answers were approved by the party in a manner highly creditable to the disinterestedness of so large a body of men. Nor were they unpalatable to the public at large. The doctrine that all politicians will sacrifice principle to office had been recently inculcated with great industry. The country was gratified, as it should be, at a practical refutation of that false and degrading supposition. Lord Westmorland, to whose understanding a combined Administration and a loss of place were synonymous, remarked on this transaction, "What an escape the country has had!"

Lord Grey communicated his answer to the Prince of Wales, and Lord Grenville apprised him of his also, before they were publicly known. When I called at Carlton House I found His Royal Highness exceedingly pleased at this attention, and mightily disposed to thrust himself into some negotiation either for a coalition or a new Administration. With that view he had offered his services to the King, and expressed a readiness to go down to Windsor; but his father in a short and dry answer declined the offer, reminding him of some assurance, formerly made (probably at the time of our dismissal from office), of never interfering in political arrangements unless *expressly requested* to do so by His Majesty. Lord St. Vincent, to whom the Prince of Wales showed this letter of His Majesty, said: "I

admire it, sir, as a masterpiece in its way; it is the best attorney letter I ever read."

Mr. Sheridan took me to Carlton House to see this correspondence. He told me in the anteroom that I should like the Prince's letter extremely. "The fact is," added he, "the Prince had drawn it out at first himself, but in a way that would never have done, awkward in expression, forgetful of things that had passed, and pledging himself to others in future that would have been the devil and all. I contrived, however, just by hinting a thing here and there, to recast the whole, and he is delighted with it; because having drawn the original sketch he fancies the picture his own, though I left none of the outline and the colouring was never his own."

No sooner was I admitted and seated than a scene ensued, which would really have been worthy of Mr. Sheridan's pencil, if he had not himself performed a part in the original. The Prince produced the paper with great complacency, and began by informing me that he was sure I should like it, "For," said he, "Sheridan will excuse me, but though he is a clever fellow at such things, I must say he had drawn up a d——d bad paper on this occasion. I just took the form and outline, but I have altered it myself, and was obliged to do so." He then read it over sentence by sentence, and almost at every word he turned to Mr. Sheridan and said: "You know it stood so and so, but I altered it," or, "You will allow that's better, Sheridan?" To all which Mr. Sheridan nodded assent. I left the house without being deeply impressed with the value of the article contended for, but utterly at a loss to decide to whom the merit, such as it was, belonged.

Lord Grenville communicated the correspondence

relative to Mr. Perceval's overture, as it was called, to Lord Sidmouth, who said, "The result of that step was such as was naturally to have been expected." He hoped, however, that Lord Grey and Lord Grenville were disposed to afford "satisfaction and confidence" to the King's mind on the Catholic question, to which Lord Grenville gave no answer.

Soon afterwards Lord Sidmouth had to return the compliment, and communicated an overture made to him of a very singular nature through Lord Chatham. It was to ask him to influence his brother-in-law, Mr. Bragge Bathurst,<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Hobhouse,<sup>2</sup> to take office. The communication was stated to be authorised and desired by the King and Mr. Perceval; but there was not one word in it expressive of a wish to have the assistance of Lord Sidmouth himself. It was of course rejected: his friends would not separate from him; but Lord Sidmouth expressed a disinclination to listen to any proposals that did not include the Whigs, unless it was ascertained that they adhered inflexibly to a measure on which the King could not give way. Mr. Perceval told Lord Sidmouth, very *frankly* at least, that his motive for desiring the aid of his friends *without him* was the unsurmountable personal objection felt to Lord Sidmouth himself by some whose support was necessary to the Government.

Lord Sidmouth, though chagrined at so preposterous a proposal and so unmannerly an explanation of it, was yet very earnest in extorting from Lord Grenville

<sup>1</sup> [Right Hon. Charles Bragge Bathurst, cousin of Lord Bathurst. He accepted the post of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster from Lord Liverpool in 1812.]

<sup>2</sup> [Sir Benjamin Hobhouse (1757—1831), father of the first Lord Broughton. Secretary to the Board of Control under Addington in 1803, and created a baronet in 1812.]



some declaration on the subject of the Catholics, that is, the views and intentions of the Whigs as to what he termed *setting the King's mind at ease*. Lord Grenville very prudently answered that to the principle of Mr. Perceval's Government, that is, to a pledge in itself unconstitutional, he could not directly or indirectly ever become a party; but that it was not possible to enter into further explanations of his views or of his possible conduct on the subject of Irish Catholics in all the various circumstances that might arise; nor could any answer be given to general phrases, such as *setting the King's mind at ease*, and the like, it not being known what would be required for that purpose.

On the death of the Duke of Portland, Lord Grenville was chosen Chancellor of the University of Oxford. It was considered as a triumph at the time, though it was perhaps owing to a persuasion in that learned body that the object of their choice would ere long be Minister of the country; though there was some sagacity in an apprehension of Lord Cowper's that it might have a pernicious effect on Lord Grenville's opinions even in Opposition, and yet worse if he should obtain power on all subjects connected with the Church.<sup>1</sup> To remove, as far as he could with honour and consistency, the jealousies entertained of his principles respecting the Roman Catholics, he wrote and printed a letter on the subject. It contained a firm exposition of his opinions, and in point of composition did him great credit; but it revived the agitation of details which it would have been more advantageous to postpone till further

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Sydney Smith said coarsely, but wittily, that the Whig canvass for Lord Grenville at Oxford was like the trustees of the Magdalen applying to place a reclaimed prostitute at a bawdy house.—V.H.

progress was made in the main measure, and it seemed in some degree to pledge him to support *the Veto*, which in a few years he acknowledged to be impracticable and, though desirable, not absolutely necessary. He valued the distinction of the Chancellorship very highly. The unbiassed suffrages of a learned and pious body were, in his estimation, so many testimonies to literature, taste, integrity, and virtue. Who, therefore, of an honest mind but was gratified at seeing a man who had sacrificed so much to a sense of public duty rewarded at last by a favourite and innocent object of ambition?

I was not myself altogether insensible to an appointment, however comparatively humble, which, upon the death of the Duke of Portland, was conferred upon me by the Corporation of Nottingham. They chose me Recorder, from respect to the memory of Mr. Fox and a persuasion that I should never abandon his principles.

In November, 1809, died John Henry, second Marquess of Lansdowne,<sup>1</sup> after possessing that title about four years, during which time he never took any part in debate nor even voted in the House of Lords. He had been harassed by Government or by individuals in Ireland for his incautious expression of violent political opinions a short time before he succeeded to his title. The lady, whom he avowed as his wife immediately upon his father's death, was not sorry to draw him nearer to the winning side. He was a very accomplished man, with much general knowledge, but yet more wit and eloquence, though both were of a very laboured kind. He had more singularity

<sup>1</sup> [Better known as Lord Wycombe. His wife was the widow of Sir Duke Gifford, of Castle Jordan, in Ireland. Lord Lansdowne was succeeded by his half-brother, Lord Henry Petty.]

of conduct than originality of thought, but he had much of the latter. He was neither ambitious nor designing, and but for suspicion might have been a good man. But he had perversely persuaded himself, and some errors in his education had taught him, to guard against every kind affection of the heart—a quarter in which he was not by nature very vulnerable.

I owe much of the little useful knowledge I possess to the habits I acquired in an intimate intercourse with him—perhaps, among other things, the faculty, such as it is, of writing these memoirs. It is true he afterwards used me and mine unkindly and unjustly; but it was not without a pang that I saw a person from whom I had derived so much amusement and instruction, and with whom I had lived in such friendship, sinking at the age of forty-two or forty-three into an untimely grave. He told me a fortnight before his death that he was not fool enough to imagine that he was ever to rise from that couch; and after some sarcastic irony on the received notions of religion in which he was apt to indulge, he assured me that the thoughts of approaching death had never kept him awake for a minute, though he had been aware of it for more than two months. “I am surprised at this,” he added, “for when in health I should have guessed that such a conviction would have harassed me exceedingly; it is true, however, there is some little lethargy in my complaint, and that may contribute to account for it.” He composed an epitaph for himself, beginning,

Here lies drowned in his armchair,

and he fixed therein upon the period of his decease



as well as described the mode very nearly as it happened.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Henry Petty<sup>2</sup> was by this event removed to the House of Lords. He was the best hope of the Whig party in the Commons; and he himself evidently at first considered the accession of a princely fortune and a seat in the House of Lords as a loss, till in a few years the solid comforts of those possessions compensated for the uncertain objects with which his ambition had occasionally dazzled his judgment.

An opinion, grounded, I suspect, on their wishes, had gone forth among the Whigs that Mr. G. Ponsonby<sup>3</sup> was desirous to retire from Parliament, or at least from the prominent station, which, in compliance with the earnest solicitation of friends, he had consented to occupy. His nephew, Lord Ponsonby, confirmed the report; but Mr. Ponsonby himself, on being questioned by Lord Grey, "stated distinctly his *wish* to continue leader, if Lord Grey and Lord Grenville did not object to it." The Duke of Bedford, at my instance, brought in Mr. Brougham, who, from his eloquence, knowledge, zeal, and activity, was a prodigious accession to that party whose principles he had espoused and in a variety of ways very ably maintained. He had, indeed, spoken of late very coldly of the Catholic question, and very contemptuously of Parliament; but when offered a seat, on the sole understanding that he was neither adverse to the

<sup>1</sup> [Princess Liechtenstein, in her book on Holland House, alludes to this story as a fabrication. Her version, however, is that the lines were composed by Lord Holland, describing the probable nature of his own death.]

<sup>2</sup> [Son of William, first Marquess of Lansdown, by his second wife, Lady Louisa Fitzpatrick; born in 1780.]

<sup>3</sup> [Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons.]

concessions to the Roman Catholics nor to an immediate agitation of them in Parliament, he accepted it without hesitation. His conduct there I shall have occasion to remark ; but with the exception of a few evening visits during the Walcheren inquiry, he henceforth studiously and unaccountably avoided my society. For full six years I had no political or private intercourse with a man whom I had been so anxious to place and so successful in placing in the House of Commons,<sup>1</sup> and who never assigned, nor, I believe, could assign, any motive for dropping all habits and connection with me.

His treatment of Mr. Horner, though more easily accounted for, was more unpardonable. They were of the same age, education, habits, and pursuits: in capacity and application nearly equal, but in temper and disposition very unlike. Mr. Horner, whose every feeling sprung from a warm heart and whose lightest actions were regulated by a well-considered sense of duty, promoted and rejoiced at every advancement of his friend towards distinction and celebrity. He was zealous in forwarding his interests, and ready to co-operate with cordiality in maintenance of the public principles which they professed in common. Not so Mr. Brougham. He visibly estranged himself from his early friend and companion. Where a shade of difference existed, he loved to bring it out rather than soften it down ; and in all dealings with or about Mr. Horner, showed such want of affection that the high, though gentle, spirit of the other perceived it, and without

<sup>1</sup> In 1815, or early in 1816, Lady Holland and myself were asked if we would receive him without any explanation of his long estrangement. We answered, "Yes"; and he resumed the habits of familiarity and intimacy as if nothing had happened.—V.H. [See p. 234.]

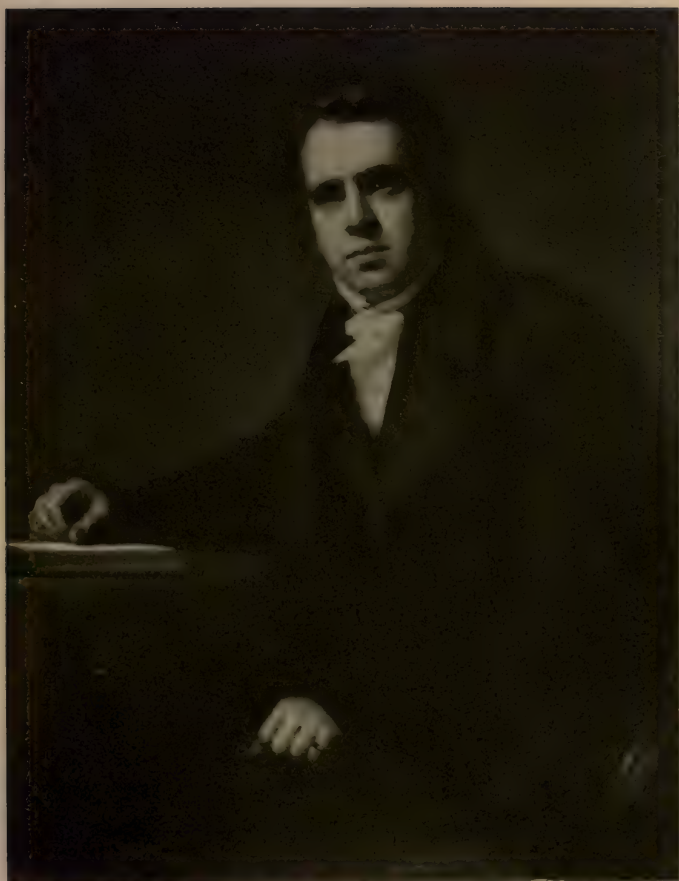
stooping to any grovelling act of resentment, disdained to court a friendship which he saw he could not preserve. To others Mr. Horner endeared himself more and more every day, and with the House ingratiated himself very perceptibly. Had his health, fortune, and life permitted, he would soon have commanded the affections of his party, and acquired a great ascendancy in Parliament, by the variety of his attainments, the simple earnestness of his manner, the benevolence and sweetness of his disposition, and the inflexible integrity which was as firmly rooted in his mind as it was indicated in his stern and manly, but not repulsive, countenance.

Mr. Brougham, by his unwearied exertions and wonderful powers, made himself formidable to his enemies; he was frequently very serviceable to his cause, and occasionally popular out of doors. The House did not like him, but they always feared and sometimes admired him. Had the management of the Walcheren inquiry devolved upon him, he thought, and perhaps justly, that the result would have been a censure on the Ministers.

The sensation on that subject both in and out of Parliament was exceedingly strong. Many members were unquestionably inclined to express their disapprobation of the expedition by a vote at the commencement of the Session, who, in the course of the long investigation, were prevailed upon to suppress their opinions, by a persuasion that time had somewhat softened the indignation of their constituents and that a censure would inevitably change the government of the country. Lord Porchester,<sup>1</sup> who conducted the business in the Commons, though honest,

<sup>1</sup> [Henry George, Lord Porchester, who succeeded his father as second Earl of Carnarvon in 1811. Born in 1772; died in 1833.]





*Francis Horner M.P.*



firm, and eloquent, was not skilful in the examination of witnesses. Mr. Ponsonby was not more adroit nor more expeditious. Mr. Brougham was more intent on exposing their oversights and errors in private, than in rectifying them in public. Yet the ingenuity and imagery of Mr. Windham's speeches must have delighted, and the sound argument and plain sense of Mr. Tierney's convinced, the audience. The vote, therefore, of approbation was scarcely more at variance with the wishes of the minority and the expectations of the public, than with the real opinions of the majority who passed it. It was the strongest practical argument ever furnished for a reform of Parliament: for the House of Commons on that disgraceful occasion spoke neither the sense of the people whom it represented, nor even of the individuals who composed its body.

Pending the inquiry, the House of Lords was more than usually inactive. We could not with prudence or even with propriety take up the same subject; and the public was so engrossed with it that no other would have excited much interest. Lord Grenville, Lord Grey, and Lord Lauderdale<sup>1</sup> opposed the thanks to Lord Wellington for the victory of Talavera. The two last, much to my regret, entered a protest to the vote. Lord Wellesley spoke for the first time in the character of a Minister, and he spoke with feeling, vivacity, and effect. He was designated for Secretary for the War Department, in room of Lord Castlereagh, by Mr. Canning; but had in the meanwhile been sent by him [as] Ambassador

<sup>1</sup> [James, eighth Earl of Lauderdale (1759—1839). During the greater part of his political life he was included among the ultra-Whigs, but after 1820 his views underwent a radical change, and he even became an opponent of Lord Grey's Reform Bill.]



to Spain, where, after indulging his bad taste in a few silly bravadoes, he showed in essentials much foresight, and took a more accurate and comprehensive view of the policy of the country to which he was accredited, than is usual in an English diplomatist, and than could have been expected in so short a residence. On the rejection of the overtures to the Whigs, Mr. Perceval offered him the Foreign Seals. Mr. Canning and his friends were not a little mortified at his accepting them. Lord Liverpool, who had successively held the Foreign and Home Department, succeeded Lord Castlereagh in the third Secretaryship; and Mr. Ryder<sup>1</sup> replaced him, after Mr. Yorke had refused to resume that office which he had filled during Mr. Addington's Administration with some credit for talents for business.

The melancholy death of Mr. Eden<sup>2</sup> in January, 1810, induced his father, Lord Auckland, to absent himself from Parliament, and vacated a Tellership of the Exchequer. It was rumoured at first that Mr. Perceval would give it to another son of Lord Auckland's; but though Mr. Perceval was not devoid of that sort of liberality, it was not likely to make him so far overstep the line of political interest. The Admiralty was vacated by Lord Mulgrave succeeding to the Ordnance, which Lord Chatham had been compelled to relinquish; and Mr. Yorke<sup>3</sup> was induced to accept the Admiralty by

<sup>1</sup> [Right Hon. Richard Ryder (1766—1832), second son of Nathaniel, first Baron Harrowby.]

<sup>2</sup> [William Frederick Eden (1782—1810), eldest son of William, first Lord Auckland, and Deputy-Teller of the Exchequer. He was found drowned in the Thames.]

<sup>3</sup> [Right Hon. Charles Philip Yorke (1764—1834), eldest son of the Right Hon. Charles Yorke, by his second wife; Secretary for War under Mr. Addington.]

the provision for life, which the Tellership, offered with it, afforded.

On the first report of his vacating his seat for Cambridgeshire, a hair-brained, zealous man of the name of Goodwin, without any connection or acquaintance with the county, apprised the freeholders in an anonymous advertisement that a Whig candidate would start; and thus prevailed upon Lord Francis Osborne to come forward, who was chosen with little expense—a circumstance not less surprising from his gallantry in furnishing Mr. Goodwin, without any previous acquaintance with him, with an unlimited credit on his banker. This anecdote, hardly worth preserving, shows how activity and decision carry points little expected, and was at the time an indication of the unpopularity of Ministry.

Much of the Session and more of the public attention were occupied on questions of privilege. They had been very unadvisably raised by the imprisonment of one Gale Jones,<sup>1</sup> who had written against the exclusion of strangers from the House; and they were further provoked and kept up by Sir Francis Burdett. He denied in the most offensive form he could devise the right of the House to imprison. He forgot that he had, the year before, directed papers to be seized and other powers to be exerted, which, supposing no authority in Parliament to punish, could hardly be legal and certainly could not be enforced. As Gale Jones had been imprisoned, the House could not with decency overlook yet more flagrant conduct in a member. Sir Francis Burdett was sent to the Tower. Disturbances in the town, division among

<sup>1</sup> [John Gale Jones, the President of a debating society known by the high-sounding name of the "British Forum." He was by trade an apothecary.]

the Whigs, division of public attention from the incapacity and misconduct of Ministers, and great diminution of confidence in the House of Commons, were the natural consequences of this ill-timed execution of an arbitrary power, which, though in some cases necessary to the preservation of Parliament, can scarcely ever be expedient except against the inroads of some other authority in the State. The privileges of the Commons are intended as means of defence against power, not as weapons of offence against liberty or even licentiousness. Such powers must indeed be discretionary. But the representative body, when it assumes an attitude of menace towards the people, perverts such instruments to purposes for which they were never entrusted to it, and runs considerable hazard of having them wrested from their hands.

The last efforts of Mr. Windham in Parliament were in support of its unquestionable privileges and of the unseasonable and unwarrantable exercise of them on this occasion. He had been during the whole of the Session at war with the public prints and reporters. Upon the exclusion of strangers, whence directly or indirectly flowed all the embarrassing questions concerning privilege, both he and Mr. Tierney had expressed themselves in a way which gave great offence to that class of men, who had been of late years, and are still, actuated by a common feeling, an *esprit de corps*, not altogether so favourable to liberty or advantageous to the cause of truth as formidable to those with whom they chance to be displeased. They suppressed for a time the speeches of both these gentlemen.<sup>1</sup> Cobbett disclosed some particulars of Mr. Windham's intercourse with him,

<sup>1</sup> This they technically call "cushioning" a speaker.—V.H.



from which it would seem that Mr. Windham was not so incapable of courting a good word from the newspapers as he pretended, and, above all, was not likely to be indifferent to the menaced omission of his name in debates. He had often corrected his speeches, and consulted both the taste and convenience of the reporters, by speaking from the place in the House which they had informed him was best adapted to his voice and delivery. The gratification derived from his eloquence, which the spite of these little men had for a season interrupted, was soon irretrievably lost. He died lamented and admired in the beginning of June, 1810.

Mr. Malone printed a short sketch of his life and character. It is probably very correct; it is certainly very insipid. Mr. Windham left behind him some treatises on scientific subjects, and many volumes of a journal, begun, it is said, at the instance of Dr. Johnson.<sup>1</sup> It was entrusted to Mr. G. Ellis,<sup>2</sup> who, with a view of writing a life of Mr. Windham, made many extracts from it, which I have seen. I am told that Mr. Windham mentions in his journal, his having prayed fervently for the soul of Dr. Johnson in Switzerland many years after that great writer's death. It is, I believe, well ascertained that previous to the operation on which his own death ensued, he took the Sacrament privately at a distant church.<sup>3</sup> Such circumstances prove that the extreme aversion

<sup>1</sup> [Published in 1866, by Mrs. Henry Baring.]

<sup>2</sup> [George Ellis (1745—1815), miscellaneous writer. He contributed to the *Rolliad* and the *Anti-Jacobin*.]

<sup>3</sup> The Charter's House, I think.—V.H.

[Mr. Windham died from the effects of a severe operation for tumour, which was caused by a slight injury received about a year before, while helping to save a valuable library from a fire in the house of his friend, the Hon. Frederick North.]

he always manifested to anything bordering on impiety in conversation was not merely dictated by taste, decorum, or good breeding, but the result of a real sense of religion. If Crawford had "known" (says General FitzPatrick, in a letter to me of September 30, 1810) "more of Windham, he would not have been surprised at his strict observance of the ceremonies of religion. He held the *profession* of it to be a high moral duty, as did Burke, and I believe neither of them ever allowed their sincerity to be questioned."

I hope the Christian reader will not be scandalised, or the sceptical disposed to scoff at my mentioning these circumstances; it is useful to record the various sentiments held by men of integrity and capacity on such topics in the same age. The religious and irreligious may learn from thence to have less confidence in their own persuasion and more toleration for opinions in which they do not concur. The passages<sup>1</sup> extracted by Mr. G. Ellis from Mr. Windham's journal, and, as I am informed, all the other parts of that work, relate rather to the history of his studies, his feelings, and his understanding, than to any actual events of his life or public occurrences of his time. Self-examination and self-reproach, magnificent projects and poor performances, designs of study and periods of idleness, irresolution, and remorse, form a lamentable picture of an infirm mind; and though there are some paragraphs remarkable for their eloquence, and more observations worth the attention of a metaphysician, the total absence of all affection and, with the exception of Dr. Johnson, of all admiration

<sup>1</sup> I have been told that some parts of the original, not extracted by Mr. Ellis, and written in very plain English but in the Greek character, are very strange, and relate to very strange subjects.—V.H.

or deference for others, deprives this painful exposure of all his inmost thoughts and feelings of anything like interest for the man. Few, it would appear, have been less satisfied, but none more exclusively occupied with themselves, than Mr. Windham. On that subject he is minute even to tediousness, plaintive and melancholy almost to insanity. *Pauvre humanité!*

Mr. Perceval's unnecessary grant of £100,000 to the clergy<sup>1</sup> led me and Mr. Allen<sup>2</sup> to examine the history of the first-fruits and tenths. We thought that we had discovered that the Crown was empowered, and even enjoined by law, to make a new valuation of them, and to appropriate the amount of the revenue which would arise from such a measure to the objects of Queen Anne's Bounty. I moved a string of resolutions to that purpose, but was discomfited by the production of a clause in an Act of George I., which had, I believe, been originally introduced into the Bill by some manœuvre or contrivance, and which certainly bore little or no reference to the title thereof. It was discovered by the learned Bench about twenty-four hours before I came down to the House; and as I had communicated the substance and, I think, the form of my resolutions to them, their policy was more conspicuous than their candour in withholding this discovery from my notice till my speech was delivered and my motion made.

<sup>1</sup> [By a clause in the Appropriation Bill this sum was to be handed over to Queen Anne's Bounty for the relief of the poorer clergy.]

<sup>2</sup> [Dr. John Allen (1771—1843). He was first introduced to Lord and Lady Holland in 1801, and accompanied them to Spain as their medical adviser. After their return in 1805, he lived almost entirely at Holland House, and was treated as a member of the family. He was a constant contributor to the Whig periodicals and reviews, and also published several historical treatises.]



In June Lord Grey moved an address on the state of the nation. The object of the motion was to recapitulate the dangers of the country; to expose the rashness of our policy, foreign and domestic; and to record the public principles of himself and his friends by marking, on one hand, the difference between the system he recommended and that pursued by the Government, and on the other, a line of separation between himself and those reformers who were for circumscribing the powers of Parliament as well as altering fundamentally the basis of the representation. In all parts of this address, even those which glanced at a moderate reform of Parliament, Lord Grenville, though absent from illness, signified his concurrence. I, who voted for the motion, had some slight objection to parts of it, and entertained great doubt of the necessity or policy of any such laboured declaration of our political creed. Lord Erskine and the Duke of Norfolk courted popularity by expressing doubts on the privilege question; but neither the one nor the other had the courage to contend manfully with Lord Grey and resort to the only arguments by which their opinions could be plausibly maintained. They therefore involved themselves in generalities, or entangled the question in legal subtleties.

At the latter end of this Session Lord Lauderdale objected to a flagrant job in favour of Mr. Walter Scott's brother; Lord Melville defended it on the score of rewarding poetical genius; and I, after ironically congratulating Lord Melville on his tardy conversion to the beauties of poetry, to which he had shown himself so insensible in the instance of his countryman Burns, acquiesced in the propriety of rewarding Walter Scott, but deprecated a job in-

jurious to the public service in favour of his brother. When I visited Scotland in the summer the irritable bard would not deign to speak to me, and even closed his mouth when he perceived me listening to the good stories he was telling at the other end of the table at a club where I met him at Edinburgh.<sup>1</sup>

Both the theatres had been burnt down in the autumn of 1808 and the spring of 1809.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding the losses of Mr. Kemble, which were in some degree repaired by the Duke of Northumberland, who on this and some other rare occasions capriciously belied his general character by an act of useful generosity, Covent Garden Theatre was rebuilt and opened in 1810. An attempt was made to raise the prices. An unusual number of private boxes, and the introduction of an Italian singer on the stage, rendered that innovation yet more unpalatable to the public. They thought an undue advantage was taken of that entire monopoly which the hopeless state of the Drury Lane Theatre concerns virtually conferred on Covent Garden.

The taste for expensive exhibitions, the real or

<sup>1</sup> [Lord Lauderdale's amendment in the House of Lords was directed against the payment of compensation to Mr. Thomas Scott for the abolition of a small Government post in Edinburgh, to which he had only been appointed a short time previously. A letter from Sir Walter Scott to his brother, written a few weeks later, is quoted in Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott*: "Lord Holland has been in Edinburgh, and we met accidentally at a public party. He made up to me, but I remembered his part in your affair, and *cut* him with as little remorse as an old pen." The meeting took place at a dinner of the *Friday Club*.]

<sup>2</sup> [Covent Garden Theatre was destroyed by fire in September, 1808, and Drury Lane in February, 1809. The former was reopened by Kemble, with *Macbeth*, in September, 1809. The rise in prices, which aroused the displeasure of the theatre-going public, was but a small one. An extra shilling was to be charged for the boxes, and sixpence for the pit. The riots continued until the middle of December, when the original prices were restored.]

nominal change in the value of money, and the increased salary of the actors, did indeed seem to justify some advance in the price of admission. But the managers were injudicious in their mode of proposing the innovation, of resisting the clamours of the audience, and of yielding piecemeal to their demands. Prejudice and hissing became clamour; clamour was soon exasperated into riot; and riot, when headed by Mr. Clifford,<sup>1</sup> a Roman Catholic lawyer of considerable name, seemed likely, in the apprehension of many, to swell into political sedition, and become the prelude or instrument of more mischief than disturbing a play or keeping down the price of theatrical exhibitions.<sup>2</sup>

The apprehension was groundless; though it must be acknowledged that the pretension of affixing a price to anything by popular clamour was one of fearful example, and Mr. Clifford was a man capable, both from temper and talents, of harbouring and executing very mischievous designs. Impatience of the unjust disabilities under which his sect labours had reconciled him to violent opinions in politics; and unrestrained habits of intemperance had inflamed the malignity of a disposition not originally amiable, without impairing the very acute perceptions and strong intellect with which Nature had endowed him. He was, however, pacified by the submission of the managers, seemed to bear his triumph meekly, and

<sup>1</sup> [Henry Clifford (1768—1813), son of Hon. Thomas Clifford, or Tixall, Staffordshire.]

<sup>2</sup> The old Duke of Queensberry, in theory and practice the most selfish philosopher and consistent voluptuary of our days, tremblingly alive to every appearance of danger which threatened even remotely the stability of property, took the alarm. I believe he parted with money in support of the interests of the managers, and he subscribed largely soon afterwards to the rebuilding of Drury Lane Theatre.—V.H.



if he entertained any project of engrafting further designs on the popularity to which he had raised himself, he did not live to develop them. The drams, which were unable to extinguish his spirit or drown his reason, undermined his bodily constitution, and brought him in the middle of life and in possession of all his faculties to an untimely grave soon after the unenviable distinction he had obtained.

If in the unprofitable career of such men moralists may find a warning against the indulgence of sensual or malignant passions, legislators and statesmen may learn the impolicy of converting by laws of exclusion those faculties, which in the service of the State might improve the happiness and raise the glory of the country, into engines of torment to the possessors, and of mischief to the Commonwealth. This incident (which was called O.P., or Old Prices) probably suggested to many minds the necessity of another theatre, and thereby facilitated the completion of an undertaking in which I was soon afterwards subordinately engaged, *viz.*, the rebuilding of Drury Lane Play-house, and procuring an Act of Parliament to constitute the subscribers a Joint Stock Company for that purpose.

At the close of this year, 1810, the disorder to which the King had been frequently subject recurred with such violence as to incapacitate him from discharging the functions of his situation, and ultimately to become confirmed insanity without any hope of recovery. In preserving some facts connected with his complaint, and in making some remarks on his character, I trust to the reports of others rather than to my own personal observation. My direct intercourse with George III. was very slight, and chiefly confined to mere form and civility. He inherited from

his mother a scrofulous habit, which, when malignant, not unfrequently terminates in madness. Such instances had, I believe, occurred in the Saxe-Gotha family, from which Frederick, Prince of Wales, unfortunately selected his consort.

There was a story current, that a disposition to lunacy was apprehended in the King's illness of 1765. Letters from the King soon afterwards, speaking of medical injunctions to him to abstain from business,<sup>1</sup> and a passage in Smollett's *Continuation*, mysteriously worded and yet more mysteriously cancelled in most but not all the copies, give, it is said, some colour to the report. If his son's account of his behaviour in the riots of 1780 and at the dissolution of Lord North's Ministry can be credited, strong symptoms of derangement appeared on both those occasions. He announced, on both, a design of retiring to Hanover. Disgust at the scenes of 1780, and chagrin at the events of 1782, might indeed, in both instances, rationally account for so hasty a resolution; but the disproportionate earnestness about trifles, especially the liveries of his servants when he should arrive in Germany (circumstances which I have heard His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales describe with more vivacity than filial grace), could hardly be reconciled with the possession of a sound judgment. Throughout life his manner was hurried, his conversation on indifferent subjects rapid and incoherent, on persons detracting and malicious. When constrained to business he was clear and decisive; but he often betrayed the narrowest prejudices on things and that constitutional suspicion

<sup>1</sup> Such I have seen from him to his sister, the Crown Princess of Brunswick; the copy of Smollett's edition containing the mysterious passage I never saw. His son, George IV., when Prince of Wales, told me it was in Lord Buckingham's library or in Buckingham House library; and, strange to say, I forget which.—V.H.

of mankind which is so frequent a concomitant of a disordered understanding. Mr. Fox, in his first interview with the King, remarked that he had a "very mad look in his eyes." They were without question singularly unsteady, through their extreme short-sightedness, and the continued see-saw motion of his body seemed to account for that defect. In the Coalition Administration his conduct in Cabinet was one day so strange that on his leaving the room, which he did with levity and abruptness, Lord John Cavendish observed, "His Majesty is certainly wrong in the upper story."<sup>1</sup>

In 1788 a positive derangement of intellect was discovered and acknowledged. Since that period he had two very decided relapses, and perhaps he was never afterwards entirely free from occasional aberrations of mind, though they were sufficiently controlled to escape the notice of the public and the interference of Ministers. The recollection of his first illness and the dread of its return gave for some time great ascendancy to those about

<sup>1</sup> [The following anecdote appears in a manuscript volume containing various reminiscences and short essays written by Lord Holland, which may possibly relate to the incident mentioned in the text: "In the Coalition Administration there was a Cabinet held for granting pardons and reprieves and signing warrants of execution, etc., when a difficulty occurred that had not been foreseen, *viz.*, that when sentence of death was converted into transportation there was no place to transport the felons to. Some conversation ensued between Lord North and Mr. Fox, when His Majesty, with a levity quite unusual to his character, said, 'Gentlemen, the felons used to be sent to America. But America is now lost. It is none of my fault. It is for you, gentlemen' (addressing Mr. Fox and Lord North) 'to settle it between you;' and retired half bowing and skipping out of the room. Mr. Fox, probably from having been disconcerted at so strange a sally, would never allow that there was the least pleasantry or fun in this singular trait of His Majesty; and General Conway observed on the spot that it seemed to him His Majesty was a little touched in the head."]



him, and combined with his alarm at the French Revolution to render him accommodating and even submissive to Mr. Pitt for many years. But when the secession seemed to disband the party whom he dreaded, George III. insensibly reverted to his early habits of intrigue and duplicity, thwarted many little projects of his ostensible Ministers, fortified subordinate agents in their hostility to others, and finally drove his confidential servants to resign by a passionate and obstinate resistance to a measure long in contemplation and of great national importance.<sup>1</sup> No sooner had he released himself from the constraint of Mr. Pitt's Administration than a virulent attack of his disorder occurred. The appointments necessary to complete the new Ministry were suspended for some weeks in consequence of his incapacity, and Lord Chancellor Rosslyn had the hardihood to make him sign a Commission to pass the Brown Bread Bill while he was actually under the control of keepers. His relapses afterwards were frequent. Lord Sidmouth has more than once acknowledged to me, that the uncertainty of the King's health was his chief, if not only, motive for resigning in 1804, and not facing the coalition of Fox, Pitt, and Grenville, which, had he remained in office, would have speedily ensued.

In 1806 the King was kept on his good behaviour by his fears of a Ministry which he had considered as hostile to him and favourable to his son. He confined himself strictly to business, and indeed his intercourse with all of us was so rare that it could not be difficult for him to suppress any morbid delusion during the few hours, which once in the course of a fortnight he allotted to audiences of the

<sup>1</sup> [Mr. Pitt resigned in 1801 on account of the King's refusal to deal in any way with the Roman Catholic question.]

members of his Cabinet. The gentleman who conducted his correspondence was Colonel Taylor,<sup>1</sup> a man of discretion and judgment, who had many obvious and possibly some secret (though not dishonourable) motives for concealing any infirmity of the kind. For myself, in my last, and indeed only, audience, when I delivered up the Privy Seal, His Majesty was so hurried that I felt it a relief to quit the room. I will not say that his conversation denoted madness, but certainly the subsequent insanity of any man, who had spoken in the way and with the gestures he then did, could never have surprised me.

In the autumn of 1810 the approaching death of Princess Amelia deeply afflicted him. That affliction was followed by a paroxysm which terminated in confirmed insanity. It was an affecting coincidence, that the dawn of his reviving reason in 1788 had been marked by the strong emotions of natural affection at the accidental sight of the very daughter whose illness occasioned this last and fatal relapse. She was said to be his favourite child; but he had much tenderness for all his daughters, as well [as] for the Duke of York, and perhaps the Duke of Cambridge: he had little, if any, for his other children. In the early part of his reign he had shown himself harsh, unkind, and vindictive to his brothers. He was cold, jealous, and unjust to the Prince of Wales in his childhood; distant and suspicious ever afterwards.

In general his virtues were not of an engaging nor his endowments of a dazzling character. He had a bad opinion of mankind, a contracted but by no means a feeble view of every subject. With a nature so

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Herbert.—V.H.

[He was originally Military-Secretary to the Duke of York, and first acted as Secretary to the King in 1804. It is stated on his own authority that he was the first Private Secretary employed by George III.]

little attractive, without one brilliant qualification, and during a reign marked by disasters, how did he contrive to win the affections of many and popularity with the great mass of his subjects? After due allowance be made for the childish love of Princes so prevalent in England, and the systematic policy of the demagogues in vilifying Parliament rather than the Crown, other causes must still be sought for to explain so extraordinary a phenomenon. He said indeed himself, with as much contempt for the public, but with more point, than was usual in his conversation: "I have been the most unpopular and most popular King in England; but I owed the first to my Minister, Lord Bute, and I owe the second to my son, the Prince of Wales." But there were other reasons. He was a regular, decorous, churchgoing family man. The practice of the austerer virtues was not to be imputed in him to any coldness of constitution. He was of an amorous complexion, and many involuntary avowals made during his derangements proved that his fidelity never arose from any blind partiality to the personal charms of the Queen, but from a sense of duty and propriety.<sup>1</sup> Whatever be the moral value of such self-denial, the people of England were then, and, I believe, still are, disposed to pay it full as much homage as it deserves in persons whose high stations render it of difficult attainment and wholesome example.

<sup>1</sup> [Jesse, in his *Memoirs of King George III.*, states that the King had at some period of his youth conceived a passionate admiration for Elizabeth, Countess of Pembroke, daughter of Charles, second Duke of Marlborough. Whether this ever came to the knowledge of the lady in question is uncertain, but her beauty seems to have made a deep impression on George III.'s mind. During his illness in 1789, and again in 1810, her name was continually on his lips; and it is even reported that he thought he was married to her, and was furious at not being allowed to see her.]



The King had, however, virtues of a higher order, great decision and consistency and courage, both personal and political. He adhered firmly to the principles of government that he approved, and he was steady in the protection of those who supported him in them. He never lost sight of his objects; and could he have found Ministers as firm or as obstinate as himself, he would never have surrendered a measure, as he certainly never changed an opinion. He said, indeed, to every American Minister who was accredited to him, "I was the last man in England to acknowledge your independence, and I will be the last to disturb it"; but if he ever repented of his conduct, it was in submitting to that peace, not in fomenting and persisting so long in the war. "As to the question," says he, in a letter to Mr. Fox, of August, 1783, "whether I wish to receive a Minister from America, I certainly can never express its being agreeable to me; indeed, I should think it wisest for both parties to have only agents who can settle any matter of commerce; but so far I cannot help adding, that I shall ever have a bad opinion of any Englishman who would accept being an accredited Minister for that revolted State, which certainly for years cannot establish a stable Government."<sup>1</sup>

He not only cherished obstinacy in himself, but admired and inculcated it in others. In spite of his vaunted Christianity, he despised a man who was not

<sup>1</sup> If His Majesty meant by "stable" monarchical, his prophecy has been happily fulfilled; but if he used the word in its true sense, the events of the ensuing forty years strangely belied his expectations. Almost every monarchy in Christendom has been convulsed by insurrections, revolutions, and changes, but the Republic of the United States has been uniformly tranquil and undisturbed in its sure progress, improvement, and prosperity.—V.H.

irreconcilable in his enmities as well as constant in his friendships, and he exacted not only consistent conduct but an adherence to the prejudices of education and family. This persuasion, combining with a propensity common to all old men, led him in the latter end of his life to estimate individuals by his recollection of the characters of their fathers rather than by observation on theirs. He himself rigidly conformed to the rule he expected in others. The absurd German notions of birth, imbibed in childhood, recurred with double force upon his mind in his old age. By them he regulated his sense of duty and his opinion of men. He fortified his morbid prejudices against Roman Catholics by a reference to the Protestant maxims of his House. He judged of the fitness for high station by rank rather than by talent, and he hailed the appointment of two Archbishops,<sup>1</sup> whom from their connections he called *gentlemen*, as a triumph for the Church and a consolation to himself. Descent from an early enemy or obscurity of birth were in his eyes such offences, that, with the exception of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Addington, he was seldom prevailed upon to pardon either, even in persons who were subservient or necessary to his views.

His conduct with respect to Hanover was irreproachable. He never diverted the revenue of that

<sup>1</sup> [Edward Venables Vernon (1757—1847), youngest son of George, first Lord Vernon, and Martha, daughter of Hon. Simon Harcourt; appointed to the See of York in 1807. He took the name of Harcourt in 1831, on succeeding to the estates of that family.]

Charles Manners-Sutton, grandson of the third Duke of Rutland; born in 1755; became Bishop of Norwich in 1792, and Archbishop of Canterbury in 1805; died in 1828. He was father of Charles Manners-Sutton, created Viscount Canterbury, Speaker from 1817 to 1834. Wraxall relates that Pitt was anxious to raise Dr. Tomline, Bishop of Lincoln, who was at one time his Private Secretary, to the vacancy at Canterbury. George III., however, refused to listen to the suggestion, and insisted on the appointment of Dr. Manners-Sutton.]

country to any personal or British object; he never sacrificed any British treasure or English objects to Hanoverian policy; he never converted his distinct authority as Elector into the means of thwarting an obnoxious Minister at home, or enforcing wishes which as King of England he was compelled to conceal. His behaviour to Sir James Craufurd and other Englishmen, who had broken their parole and escaped from France, reflects much honour upon him; as Napoleon had furnished examples of a less scrupulous policy, and the violence of the times, as well as the temper of his Ministers, would have enabled him to follow them without reproach or animadversion. "If a gentleman," he observed, "had derived indulgence from a promise, even to usurped authority, he was bound in honour to abide by it, however illegal the original detention or the conditions might be." George III. adhered to this principle, and would never receive any officer or English traveller who had violated it. These are the two best traits I knew of him, and for that reason I have faithfully recorded them.<sup>1</sup>

To sum up his character: he was a man of principle, honest and anxious in forming his rule of action, sagacious in the application and steady in

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, when compared with his immediate predecessors, he is entitled to some little praise for promoting literature and encouraging the arts. His father had courted popularity by affecting a passion for poetry, and the real or ostentatious respect for letters entertained by Lord Bute had impressed on his mind a notion that it became a sovereign to patronise such pursuits. He accordingly founded the Royal Library, pensioned Dr. Johnson and some less celebrated writers, and collected more than one valuable library. He had, however, little or no perception of the beauties of any of those arts he thus rewarded. He had no relish for poetry, wit, or eloquence; no love of study; no discrimination in painting, sculpture, or even conversation. He had some fanciful notions about architecture, but all perverted or bad.—V.H.



the observance of it ; but then his views were narrow and mischievous, his judgments warped, and his feelings illiberal. His distrust of mankind made him deem insincerity necessary and justifiable. He practised dissimulation, and in some few instances simulation likewise, without scruple. If he had the heart of a courageous and the talents of a dexterous or shrewd man, he wanted the enlarged understanding which constitutes wisdom, as well as all elevation and refinement of sentiment which shed so much lustre on rank. He was, too, a stranger to every generous affection which renders a Prince either amiable or benevolent. There was nothing great, nothing kind, nothing open, nothing graceful in his character or manners.

Those who look to the objects for which Governments are instituted must pronounce him an inglorious, if not a pernicious, sovereign of a free country ; but more (and I fear they are not few) who contemplate the preservation and perhaps the extension of the monarchical branch of our Constitution more as the end than the means of public administration, will, with some justice, regard George III. as a sensible man, and an able, useful, and fortunate Prince.

## INTRODUCTION TO BOOK THE SECOND

THE shock occasioned by the death of Princess Amelia, which occurred in November, 1810, put an end to any hopes that may have existed of George III.'s recovery. His intellect, already failing under the weight of years, finally gave way, and it became necessary to appoint a Regent to carry on the business of the country. The physicians still gave hopes of ultimate recovery, and the Bill which Mr. Perceval presented to the House of Commons was based on this supposition. The functions of the Crown were to be placed temporarily in the hands of the Prince of Wales, but subject to restrictions which would materially limit the scope of his powers. The Prince consulted Lords Grey and Grenville in January, 1811, as to the written protest he was preparing for presentation to Mr. Perceval; but already signs of disagreement began to appear between the Regent and the party with whom he had habitually acted. A suggestion for the reinstatement of the Duke of York as Commander-in-Chief received scant encouragement from the two Lords; while the fact of its prompt and favourable reception by the Ministers went far to

reconcile the Prince to his new advisers. The retention of the latter in office was all-important to the Queen, and every ounce of influence which she possessed over her son was thrown into the balance on their behalf. Assisted by the doctors, she represented the state of the King's health as entirely dependent on the actions of the Regent. Certain it is that the fear of in any way jeopardising the precarious existence of his father weighed heavily with the Prince, when the time arrived (February 1, 1812) for the expiration of the restrictions.

In Spain Wellington's policy of masterly inaction had fulfilled its purpose during the winter of 1810. It was impossible for Massena to maintain his position in Portugal owing to the lack of local supplies, and the English were able to resume the offensive after the arrival of reinforcements from home. Some success was obtained by the French armies in the south, where Soult captured Seville, laid siege to Cadiz, and commenced his march northwards. He was checked, however, by the success of General Graham over the besiegers of Cadiz, and returned to resume the blockade of that town. The victories of Fuentes d'Onoro and Albuera maintained the superiority of the English in the field; but owing to the junction of Soult and Marmont (who had taken over Massena's command) during the autumn of 1811, it was not until early in 1812 that Wellington was able to capture the fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos, and secure his base in Portugal from the possibility of attack.



In the north Napoleon was making vast preparations for bringing the Czar to his senses, and revenging himself on him for the defection of Russia from his commercial system—that favourite scheme of the French Emperor for humbling the pride of Great Britain by injuring her commerce. Prussia, now under the guidance of Count Hardenberg, maintained a vacillating policy, and finally, through fear of standing alone, was forced into a treaty with France whereby she was to furnish troops to further Napoleon's schemes. Austria was also driven to conclude a hollow treaty of the same kind, and Russia was thus left alone to resist the attack of the all-conquering despot.

Much suffering and misery were rife among the lower classes in England during the winter of 1811. Trade was at its lowest ebb. The effects of Napoleon's decrees against English commerce and the Orders in Council, issued by the Cabinet as a means of retaliation, fell heavily on the manufacturing districts. The United States, furious at the interference with their carrying trade, forbade all commercial transactions with England or France; and though the English Cabinet took steps to meet their views by exempting them from the operation of the measure, the American Government declared war in 1812. The Orders in Council were repealed, through the efforts of Mr. Brougham, soon after Mr. Perceval's death; but the news reached the United States too late to prevent the conflict,

Lord Wellesley resigned his office of Foreign Secretary in February, 1812. The Prince Regent renewed his negotiations with the Whig party, communicating with Lords Grey and Grenville by means of the Duke of York. No result was arrived at, and Lord Castlereagh was appointed to succeed Lord Wellesley. The whole question of the government of the country was, however, shortly reopened. On May 11 Mr. Perceval, the Prime Minister, was assassinated in the lobby of the House of Commons by Bellingham, a ruined merchant, of whose sanity there was great doubt. The Prince Regent was now forced to decide finally to which party he would give his confidence. Lord Holland gives a detailed account of the intrigues and negotiations which took place at this time. Enough to mention here that after communications with all parties, in which Lords Liverpool, Wellesley, and Moira successively took a prominent part, the Prince retained the Tory party in power, and gave Lord Liverpool full powers to form an Administration on the same basis as that which had carried on the business of the country up to the time of Mr Perceval's death.

## BOOK THE SECOND

1810 TO JUNE, 1812

N.B.—Written in 1818, 1819, 1820, 1821. Transcribed in 1824.

LORD GRENVILLE, who lived near Windsor, had very early intelligence of the King's disorder ; I think the Prince of Wales apprised him of the character and probable duration of the complaint. It had been intended to prorogue Parliament, which stood for November 1, but not for the dispatch of business. The King was too ill to sign the Commission for that day, and the two Houses on their meeting *adjourned* for a fortnight, and continued by successive adjournments to avoid the transaction of all business till December 13. The physicians had in the meanwhile been examined before the Privy Council, the report of the evidence had been laid before the two Houses on November 29, and the news of the King's amendment and probable recovery was immediately afterwards very sedulously and generally circulated.

The Prince of Wales cautiously or scrupulously abstained from all political concert with the Opposition, till official communications should be made to him from Ministers or from Parliament. He pushed that delicacy so far that he did not see Mr. Sheridan, who being to the full as desirous of appearing, as of being, his adviser, was ludicrously anxious to cancel so mortifying a circumstance. I was at some pains



to inform both Lord Grey and Lord Grenville of this circumstance, but it made them more negligent of Mr. Sheridan. In every rational view of the subject it should have furnished a fresh motive, as well as facilities, for fixing him in their interests. The goodwill of a man, alike brilliant in society and in Parliament and very formidable at Court, might have been propitiated and perhaps purchased at a very cheap rate, without any sacrifice of principle or any surrender of dignity. A word of cordiality, a mark of confidence, or even the homage of outward civility would have done it; Mr. Sheridan, apt to resent slights more than injuries, was, with all his impatience of real obligations, very sensible of petty kindnesses.<sup>1</sup> A small favour soothed his vanity, a great one offended his pride. Incapable of gratitude, he was yet never hard to please. His mortification at the Prince's neglect would have rendered him more open to little attentions. But Lord Grenville never saw him, and Lord Grey was hardly civil to him when he did; the first, partly from a total want of habits with him, and partly from a certain austerity of manners which indisposed [him] to cultivate the society of dissolute men; the latter, from an honest but somewhat overcharged disdain of all trickery and artificial characters.

If Mr. Sheridan regarded his interests only, he must have perceived that favour with the Prince could alone promote them in a Ministry formed by those two Lords. If, as is most probable, he was on this, as on other occasions, swayed chiefly by his vanity, he must have panted for the opportunity of gratifying

<sup>1</sup> Beneficia, eo usque læta sunt, dum videntur exsolvi posse: ubi multum antevenere, pro gratia odium redditur.—*Tacitus Ann.*, lib. iv. 18.

Quidam, quo plus debent, eo magis oderunt. Leve æs alienum debitorem facit, grave inimicum.—*Seneca*, ep. 19.—V.H.

it, by making those who had slighted him so unmercifully feel his importance. When the Prince soon afterwards took an avowed interest in the proceedings of Parliament, and communicated to the two Lords his intention of employing them in the formation of his Ministry, he resumed his usual habits with Mr. Sheridan. No attempt to gain the confidence of the latter was even then made by Lord Grey or Lord Grenville. The arrangement suggested by himself seemed to disprove any sinister designs against the new Administration; yet it was coldly received, and, I believe, peremptorily rejected by Lord Grenville. Before the appointments were settled, and as if to relieve the new Government from the painful necessity of excluding such abilities from their Cabinet, Mr. Sheridan applied for the Secretaryship of Ireland. That office would have removed him during the greater part of the year from London. It bespoke, consequently, no premeditated design of securing by assiduity that much-dreaded ascendancy over the mind of the Prince, which, when admitted to his society, his long intimacy, delightful conversation, and exquisite wit, ever subservient to his purposes, enabled him to assume. There were indeed other and grave objections to the appointment. Perhaps they were insurmountable. But Lord Grenville and Lord Grey showed upon that and every other occasion a repugnance to consult or to court him, and possibly a disinclination to serve him, which he was too keen-sighted not to perceive and too vain not to resent.

I have related these circumstances somewhat out of the order of time, that I may not interrupt my narrative of events, which flowed from them but did not occur till a later period. Lord Grey did not conceal his chagrin at the inaction of the Prince

during the first six weeks of his father's incapacity. In the only audience I had with the Prince of Wales, he told me that he wished to avoid all reproach, but adhered firmly to his opinions of 1788. He let me see, however, that meddling tale-bearers had reported incautious expressions of Lord Grey to him. He mentioned him, nevertheless, with regard; and though he quoted a foolish song of Captain Morris, in which Grey had been styled, "The youth who tossed his head so high," or some such phrase, he spoke of his impetuosity in terms not inconsistent with kind intentions or even with friendship and affection. Without saying anything positive, he was always very dexterous in conveying an impression to those he talked with.<sup>1</sup> Mine on this occasion was, that he would place his Government in the hands of the Whigs, but that he would take his own time and way of doing it, and that he had been nettled at the observations to which his delay had given rise, or in which their impatience had indulged.

An expression of Lord Grey had been officiously reported to the Prince as a communication to him. "If," said Lord Grey, "the Prince would but hold up his finger, he would have everything his own way." But the Prince conveyed to him and to Lord Grenville, through Mr. Adam, his determination not to see either of them. He hinted,

<sup>1</sup> It was with reference to this infirmity or talent, whichever it be, in His Royal Highness, that Mr. Fox, on being sent for by him from the country to hear an explanation of his conduct or sentiments on some public occasion, said with more peevishness, but with as much pleasantry and simplicity, as were usual in him, "Here must I leave my roses and St. Anne's, and go to London to hear a *lie an hour long* at Carlton House." Nothing could more happily describe the character of the Prince's conversation when he wished to conceal his views or opinions.—V.H.



at the same time, that they might serve him, by asking questions in Parliament concerning the steps taken by the Ministers to apprise him of the state of the King's health and of the public affairs. To Mr. Adair,<sup>1</sup> who had injudiciously sought and obtained an audience, he spoke with acrimony of the two Lords and of the late Administration (Lord Moira and myself excepted). He seemed hurt at the impatience expressed at his supineness, and said, "They think me a nervous man; by God! they shall find me an *Homme de nerfs*," with much that betrayed irritation and dislike.

This was early in December. Lord Grey set off soon afterwards to Lady Grey, who was brought to bed in Northumberland. The Prince began to speak with less reserve of his resentment at Mr. Perceval's conduct. Some manœuvres, and among them the introduction of the Chancellor<sup>2</sup> to the King as a *medical expedient*, practised by the Queen, the Ministers, and the physicians, without any concert with the Prince, greatly exasperated him. He now saw Mr. Sheridan frequently, and those connected with his Household avowed their intention of voting against Mr. Perceval's resolutions. They no longer scrupled to consult with the Whigs on the means of securing an attendance. Their efforts, however, did little against the first resolutions, which related to the mode of supplying the deficiency of the Regal power, and which were carried on December 20, 1810, by 269 to 157.

In the debate Mr. Perceval displayed some talent

<sup>1</sup> [Sir Robert Adair (1763—1855), son of Robert Adair, Surgeon to George III., and Lady Caroline Keppel, daughter of the second Earl of Albemarle.]

<sup>2</sup> [Lord Eldon.]

and more spirit. Several of the Grenville branch of Opposition, as well as Mr. Canning, voted with Ministers; they both, however, announced an intention of opposing some, if not all, the restrictions which Mr. Perceval meant to impose. The reverence for a precedent from which Mr. Pitt had derived popularity in 1788, together with some faint hopes of the King's recovery, outweighed the influence of Carlton House and the strong objections to a clumsy and unconstitutional contrivance. The latter were nevertheless enforced in an argumentative speech of Mr. Horner, which remained unanswered in debate, and is not much weakened by the written but unspoken oration attributed in *Cobbett's Register* to Mr. Croker. On the same day Mr. Perceval apprised the Prince of Wales officially of his intended motion. The Prince concerted his answer with Mr. Sheridan, and the Princes of the Blood Royal signed and printed a sort of remonstrance to the measure.<sup>1</sup>

In the House of Lords, Lord Grenville supported the resolutions; Lord Grey was absent. The management of the debate on the part of Opposition fell on Lord Lansdowne and myself, and we flattered ourselves that the constitutional objections to the strange proceeding resorted to were as clearly stated and as forcibly urged in our speeches and protest as they had been either in 1788 or in the House of Commons. For the learning and research I was chiefly indebted to Mr. Allen, who, assisted by some letters written by Doctor Lawrence and printed in *Cobbett's Register*

<sup>1</sup> [The Bill was composed of five resolutions: (1) Appointing the Prince of Wales Regent with certain restrictions: (2) Refusing him the power, for a time, of granting peerages: (3) Refusing the power of granting offices and reversions for a longer term than the royal pleasure: (4) Treating of the King's private property: (5) Vesting the management of the King's Household in the Queen.]

in 1803 and 1804, furnished me and Mr. Horner with many views of the subject and precedents from our early history strictly in point, which had escaped the researches of Lord Loughborough, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Hargrave in 1788.

The subsequent resolutions in favour of restricting the Prince Regent were carried by smaller majorities. The House of Commons had been called over. The prospect of the Prince's accession to power grew more certain; his hostility to Mr. Perceval more apparent. There were, therefore, stronger motives for resisting the second than the first string of resolutions. They passed, however, though by scanty majorities, such as 24, 16, 19. The fifth resolution was amended in a particular of some importance, on the motion of Lord Gower, by a majority of 13, the Ministry voting in the minority. Nothing remarkable occurred in the discussions. Lord Grenville's friends did not deem it necessary to sacrifice the views of the party and the substantial object of a Government, founded on the principles they approved, to a pedantic, technical, and almost superstitious reverence for his arguments of 1788; when, if the question was the same, the circumstances of the country and the reasons of State were entirely dissimilar. Mr. Sheridan was observed to be neither brilliant in his oratory nor cordial or zealous in his conduct.

In the House of Lords, Lord Grenville allowed himself to be more harassed by former opinions than was convenient to his party purposes, or indeed at all necessary to the preservation of any reasonable or substantial consistency. In deference to an ideal, prudish, and pedantic notion of nominal rather than real consistency, he confined all his opposition to particular words. He thus enabled Lord Liverpool,



after the Committee had, upon Lord Lansdowne's motion, omitted the mention of restrictions in the first resolution, in which Lord Grenville concurred, to reconcile him to voting with Ministers on the other subsequent questions, by moving himself to omit some few words to which Lord Grenville had taken exception and having the whole in a shape which that Lord was pledged to support. Lord Liverpool seized the moment and mode of accomplishing his purpose with admirable quickness and dexterity; and as two peers, Lord Ashburton,<sup>1</sup> from simplicity and blind reliance on Lord Grenville, and Lord Auckland,<sup>2</sup> from a want of address truly unaccountable in so old a politician, followed Lord Grenville's vote and opinion against his interests and his wishes, our small majority was lost. The resolutions passed the Committee in a shape somewhat less consistent with themselves, but sufficient to secure the objects of Mr. Perceval and the concurrence of the House of Commons.

On Committees no proxies are allowed; on the Report the Ministerialists called for them, with a hope of reinstating the words which Lord Lansdowne's motion in the Committee had omitted. We determined to resist the use of proxies. But our objections could not arise till they were called for; they could not be called for till a division; and according to parliamentary usage, at least in the Lords, no speech can be made and no question put during a division. It followed that when our teller, Lord Lauderdale, peremptorily refused to mark them, a scene of great embarrassment ensued. We were

<sup>1</sup> [Richard, second Lord Ashburton (1782—1823). The title became extinct at his death.]

<sup>2</sup> [William Eden, created Lord Auckland in 1789. He died in 1814.]

like the characters in *The Critic*, at a "deadlock." The altercation and confusion increased, and I am afraid I clenched my fist, and, upon a peer offering to rise, swore aloud that, "By God, no man should speak!" At length one of the tellers, who had alone the right to open their mouths, moved an adjournment during pleasure, and on the House being resumed, the discussion on the propriety of receiving proxies commenced. We insisted that none had been called for in 1788. We had little else to allege in favour of our doctrine, for the notion (however constitutional) that we were a Convention and not a Parliament, was at variance with the recent decision of the House.

Lord Stanhope,<sup>1</sup> however, drew a very ingenious inference from the form of a proxy, which is grounded on "*the permission of our Lord the King, that Session obtained,*" or some such words. He contended the privilege could not be exerted in a case where it was manifest from the matter in hand that the permission on which it rested could never have been given. This argument, whether plausible or really sound, was sufficient to satisfy what Lord Stanhope called "the Whig majority of Peers." Those present deserved that appellation, and proved that "*les absents ont tort,*" by voting that the proxies, which would have placed them in a minority, were inadmissible.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> [Charles, third Earl Stanhope (1753—1816). He married a sister of William Pitt, whom he supported in Parliament until 1786. During that year Lord Stanhope succeeded to the title, and differences on the Sinking Fund caused him to desert his brother-in-law and ally himself to the Whigs. He was an ardent admirer of the revolutionary doctrines in France, and gave his support to any advanced schemes for reform in this country. Lord Holland gives a detailed account of his inventions and eccentric ways in the early volumes of this work. See also p. 245.]

<sup>2</sup> [By a majority of 3. The House adjourned at 5 o'clock in the morning.]

resolution was, I think, tenable and perhaps constitutional, but it was voted by persons who probably did not require that recommendation to make it go down. Lord Stanhope, delighted alike with the uproar and the success, embraced me with his long arms as we went downstairs, and whispered in my ear, "This, my dear *Citoyen*, is rare fun. If I could often have such nights as these, I would live in the House of Lords: it is such high fun."

This was on January 4, 1811. On the 5th, Lord Liverpool moved back the original words of the first resolution, and they were admitted without a division. It was a singular coincidence that these debates, arising from the lunacy of the King, were attended by another monarch who had been deposed in substance, if not in form, for a similar calamity. The King of Sweden<sup>1</sup> was under the Throne during the greater part of these discussions.

On January 6, in compliance with commands conveyed through Mr. Adam, Lord Grenville had an audience of the Prince of Wales at Carlton House. His Royal Highness began by informing him that he must consider the communication as made jointly to him and to Lord Grey, the latter unluckily being not yet returned from Northumberland. His immediate object was advice how to frame an answer to the address which would shortly be presented to him by both Houses. He then spoke with much apparent feeling of the embarrassments of his own situation, adverted to the difficulties of forming a strong Government for the conduct of

<sup>1</sup> [Gustavus IV., King of Sweden from 1792 to 1809. In the latter year he was removed from the throne by the Swedish people, who were enraged by his foreign policy. He was succeeded by his uncle.]



affairs in the House of Commons, condemned all exclusions of persons, and after acknowledging some personal dislike of Mr. Canning and glancing at the grounds of it, *viz.*, his intimacy with the Princess, he indicated the convenience and almost recommended a coalition with him. He spoke more directly of his wish to reinstate the Duke of York, and he conversed on public and foreign measures, in the judgment of Lord Grenville, both ably and satisfactorily. There was sufficient concurrence of opinion on these topics between him and Lord Grenville to remove all apprehension of a separate will in the Court and the Ministry, should the Whigs possess the latter.

At the close of the conversation he directed Lord Grenville to consult with Lord Grey and Lord Moira, and referred to him and to them the propriety of forming a new Administration and the consideration of the means of completing it; adding, that he hoped all their arrangements might be prepared by the time he assumed the functions of Regent under the authority of the Act of Parliament. Lord Grenville, after stating generally his view of public affairs, declined entering into the details of arrangements till further communication with Lord Grey and those of his friends immediately conversant with the House of Commons; he deemed it, however, an act of fairness and duty to state explicitly his views of one subject, on which the Prince of Wales had dwelt with so much emotion and honourable feeling—the reinstatement of the Duke of York. He deplored, he said, the treatment the Duke had met with; he had almost said, could such an expression be pardoned, that he felt compassion for him, for he had been, in his judgment, misrepresented and slandered.

But notwithstanding the concurrence of many of his best friends in this view of what had passed, he feared that the obstacles to the reinstatement of the Duke of York, arising from the temper of the House of Commons and from the prejudices and opinions of the great body of the public, and of the Whigs more especially, were quite insurmountable. He would cheerfully consult with others on that subject, and certainly with an earnest desire to further His Royal Highness's wishes, but he could not conceal from him that he had little hope of finding it practicable to reinstate the Duke of York as Commander-in-Chief.

Such was the substance of that conversation as related to me by Lord Grenville himself. He lost no time in communicating the result of this audience to his friends in town; and I endeavoured on that occasion to impress on his mind the necessity of prosecuting the Spanish war, and the propriety of discountenancing by some legislative acts the disposition, too prevalent in our Courts, of harassing and if possible crushing the liberty of the press. These were the two points on which I thought our leading Whigs of that day stood most in need of admonition, and I believe Mr. Horner and Sir Samuel Romilly agreed with me.

On Wednesday, January 9, Lord Grey arrived in London. The Prince saw him next day, and was yet more communicative than he had been with Lord Grenville. The result, on the subject of the Duke of York, was nearly the same. When the Prince of Wales suggested that the accession of Mr. Canning would strengthen his new Government in the House of Commons, Lord Grey, ever artless, open, and manly, exposed the impolicy of weakening the attachment of old friends by a precarious connection with

new or doubtful ones. The Prince, either designedly or accidentally, touched on a subject of some embarrassment—Lord Grenville's auditorship.<sup>1</sup> He hinted at the difficulty or even impossibility of uniting it again with the Treasury. He very pertinently remarked that Lord Grenville's recent correspondence with Mr. Perceval, in which he had scrupled to draw an order for the issue of monies upon a warrant from the Treasury, added to the embarrassment, by showing that one of these offices was in certain cases a check upon the other.

Lord Grey and Lord Grenville drew up without delay an answer to the two Houses, which was to be delivered on the 11th. The draft arrived at Carlton House as the Prince was sitting down to dinner on the 10th, and, as ill-fortune would have it, Mr. Sheridan dined with him on that day. The paper became the topic of conversation and criticism after dinner. According to the report of Mr. Adam, who was present, Mr. Sheridan inveighed against the substance and ridiculed both the composition and the authors, till the Prince swore he would not send it and requested Mr. Sheridan to alter it or to frame a new one. He seized with great avidity and emphatically approved of a remark made by that gentleman, for which, to say the truth, there was some foundation. "It was impossible," said Sheridan, "for a man who, like Lord Grenville, had voted for the first resolutions and even for some of the most offensive restrictions, to frame such an answer as would suit a Prince who wished to convey his unequivocal disapprobation of

<sup>1</sup> [Lord Grenville insisted on retaining his auditorship in addition to the post of First Lord of the Treasury. The arrangement was especially indefensible, from his objection to the principle in the case of two members of the existing Government.]



both." The Prince sent back the paper with many alterations and comments, and much underlined; and he directed the two Lords to improve the form, but to incorporate the substance of his interlineations and remarks into the answer.

In the meanwhile, or rather at the same moment, Mr. Adam brought this account to Lord Grey at my house in Pall Mall.<sup>1</sup> He related with some asperity the behaviour of Mr. Sheridan, who shortly afterwards followed him. Lord Grey, with great dignity but with much propriety and good temper, observing that it was impossible for him or Lord Grenville to be responsible for sentiments they had not written, drove off to Camelford House. Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Adam, flushed with wine and irritated by dispute, argued the question over again with considerable warmth. Mr. Sheridan at first alleged that he did not know that the two Lords had been directly and exclusively entrusted to draw up the paper; but Mr. Adam contended, and indeed proved, that Mr. Sheridan was fully aware of it. Mr. Sheridan then maintained, with some plausibility, that till they were actually Ministers they were not technically in a responsible situation, and that Lord Grenville's circumstances not only did not confer an exclusive right to advise on such a subject, but actually disqualified him from doing so with effect or propriety. The two Lords withdrew their paper, and one of Mr. Sheridan's composition was delivered. It expressed strongly enough,

<sup>1</sup> [Lord Holland was accustomed to take a house in London every year. Holland House was at that period completely surrounded by country. Dr. Drew writes in December, 1797: "Again, the walk from Kensington to Hyde Park Corner by day is pleasant enough, but the return by night dark and dangerous and infested by footpads. . . ." (*Holland House M.SS.*)]

but not very happily either in thought or in language, the Prince's disapprobation of the late proceedings.

Lord Grey and Lord Grenville, not satisfied with barely withdrawing their paper, deemed it more fair and honourable to explain, at this very early stage of their official connection with the Prince Regent, their sense of the indignity and inconvenience which might arise from the interference of unauthorised advisers in transactions for which they should be practically and constitutionally responsible. Such a declaration, however open, was bold and injudicious ; for it was not absolutely called for, though it might be justified by the occasion. Yet had they explained themselves in an audience with the Prince Regent, the firmness of their tone and the soundness of the principle they had to enforce might have produced some salutary impression on His Royal Highness : though they could hardly have prevented occasional recurrence of such events with a Prince of natural levity, whose habits were formed to very familiar intercourse not only with Mr. Sheridan but with many persons much further removed from the character and capacity of ostensible advisers. But the passion for pen and ink was strong upon Lord Grenville during the whole of that season. It outweighed every other consideration. The two Lords sent a laboured remonstrance to the Prince, in which he was taken to task for his conduct. The respective duties of a Minister who advises and of a Prince who is advised were expounded in a manner highly constitutional, but not withal very conciliatory from two statesmen on the eve of their appointment.

There can be little doubt that the first use made of this paper was to show it to Mr. Sheridan. There can be as little that he, sore at the whole transaction,

bitterly ridiculed the performance, and laboured to affix on the authors of it the design of riding the Prince with a sharp curb and stinging lash which they had not even the caution to conceal till they had reached the saddle. "He antedates the hatred due to power," said Pope to Lord Cobham; and the same thought was applied in fifty different ways to his relation Lord Grenville by Mr. Sheridan, who, in venting his resentment on this unlucky affair, gave an impression of the haughty demeanour of the two Whig Lords which he could never afterwards efface from the mind of the Regent. He wrote a long narrative of what passed in a letter to me.<sup>1</sup>

I have dwelt more on this occurrence, because I am persuaded that it indisposed the Regent's mind, and had a great effect in determining his subsequent conduct. He professed himself, however, so anxious to remove all misunderstanding that he condescended to come to me in the gout and to explain for near three hours at my couch side in Pall Mall the whole proceeding. He assured me that he looked forward with eagerness to the two Lords completing their arrangements; and that he was satisfied that on nothing, except the answer regarding the restrictions, he should ever wish to consult with anybody but Lord Grenville and those with whom he acted. Notwithstanding these assurances, there is reason to suspect that he complained of the two Lords to others besides Mr. Sheridan, for Lord Yarmouth<sup>2</sup> made some significant remarks on their imagining themselves more necessary to the Regent than they really were.

<sup>1</sup> [See Moore's *Life of Sheridan*, vol. ii. p. 394.]

<sup>2</sup> [Francis Charles, Earl of Yarmouth (1777—1842), who succeeded his father as second Marquess of Hertford in 1822.]



The difficulties in forming a Ministry were great. The Grenvilles desired to negotiate with Mr. Canning; others of our party, and Mr. Whitbread in particular, would never have been brought to consent to it. Lord Grenville was also unwilling either to resign his auditorship or to relinquish the Treasury. In the course of discussion on the latter point his evil genius dipped him again in pen and ink, and he argued for his profits and places in a manner which, though neither unreasonable nor unnatural, was more becoming a merchant than a statesman aspiring to power and fame. Such a man should consider even fair-earned emolument as a secondary and sometimes an incompatible object. Mr. Whitbread was not less stubborn or less offensive in his resistance to any union, direct or indirect, of the two offices. He acknowledged all danger from such a measure, either in itself or as a precedent, to be a mere chimera; he did not even dwell much on the violation of constitutional principle which it seemed to involve. The practical advantage of a Whig Administration, he owned, far outweighed all such considerations; but he had, it seemed, in public and private, held language on this and similar topics, which would expose him to the charge of inconsistency, should he acquiesce in any such arrangements. Having put a question, he said, the year before, to Mr. Perceval, whether Mr. Yorke received his salary as teller while First Lord of the Admiralty, and having been answered in the negative, he could never bring himself to defend Lord Grenville's receiving the salary of auditor while he was First Lord of the Treasury.

After the matter had been discussed among us with great pertinacity and some asperity on both

sides, it was at last compromised, I know not how, by the two Lords. Other difficulties in the distribution of places no doubt occurred, but many I have forgotten, and many never reached me. Gout continued to confine me to my bed for some time. Lord Grey acted throughout with judgment, temper, and firmness: he gave no reasonable cause of dissatisfaction to recent and younger partisans; he conciliated and gratified the old friends of Mr. Fox.

I had some scruples about the Spanish war. Lord Grenville, from economy, Lord Grey, from a propensity to criticise military movements, were disposed to contemplate it with less hope, and possibly with less zeal, than myself. But as they agreed on the immediate necessity of supplying Lord Wellington's army with reinforcements and vigorously supporting the plans in which he was engaged, I saw no reason for reviving the shades of difference we might have had on the origin or early progress of the war, nor for exacting a previous concurrence of opinion in certain contingencies which had not yet occurred. I was willing to take my chance of the zeal which the conduct and management of the war would inevitably have inspired in such ardent and sanguine minds as Lord Grey's and Mr. Whitbread's.

While, however, delays occurred in forming a new Ministry, those in possession did not remain inactive. Favoured by the Queen, and aided by at least one of the physicians, they worked with great assiduity and address on the affections, the fear, the vanity, and, some say, the pecuniary interests of the Prince of Wales. At one time, the King's disorder had taken a new turn, seemed to hold out great hopes of a speedy recovery, or

was likely to terminate ere long in a restoration of his intellect or in death. At another, the pressure of public business called for a stable Government, and the financial operations of the State could not be conducted with safety or advantage till the persons entrusted with the confidence of the executive Government were known. The effect of a clamour against Roman Catholics, the popularity which Mr. Perceval might give to the Princess, the consequences of any change on the King's health, and, above all, the reproaches to which the Prince would thereupon be exposed, were artfully insinuated by the partisans of the Ministers and the Queen, and perhaps really felt by others who had more direct influence over his mind as well as the opportunity of impressing their views in softer moments. The Minister was admitted to the presence of the King, and the Queen wrote instantly an account of the interview to her son. I was not allowed to copy the letter, but the substance of it was as follows: "To assure her dearest son that she was persuaded he would be highly gratified to hear that the King was improved in health; that he had seen Mr. Perceval, who was much satisfied with his whole appearance; that he had held a reasonable conversation, and inquired with great interest about all that had been done; that he had expressed himself with kindness towards the Prince, and pleased at his conduct *pending the business*." She added that she "avoided all delay in conveying such agreeable information."

The Prince, though aware of the artifice, and even diverted at the formal expression of, *pending the business*, which he shrewdly observed was "no woman's phrase, but a lawyer's," was nevertheless much agitated and intimidated by the letter. Such fears were said to



be improved upon by Sir Henry Halford,<sup>1</sup> who repeated observations to the King, affected to dread the consequences of any change of Ministers, not only on the disorder, but on the life, of the King, and is much belied if he did not convert his professional access to the Prince of Wales to purposes purely political. The Duke of Cumberland observed in a letter, "Vaughan (Sir Henry Halford) has behaved nobly by us all." I cannot vouch for the fact of his active interference, but accounts of it reached me through channels worthy of credit, and they were generally believed.

On January 21, 1811, Lord Grey and Lord Grenville informed the Prince Regent by letter that they were ready to undertake the Government, but advised him to institute a fresh inquiry into the state of the King's health; and if it should appear probable that His Majesty would be able to resume the exercise of the Regal functions *within a few weeks*, then and in that case, they recommended him not to change the Ministers; though they disclaimed all approbation, much less adoption, of their system of policy being implied from their recommendation, or from the Prince Regent's compliance with it by continuing them in office. If the result of the inquiry was different, they then repeated their readiness to submit without delay to the Prince Regent the appointments which they should recommend to His Royal Highness.

On the evening of the 25th, the Prince Regent, after stating to Lord Moira, Lord Hutchinson, and Mr. Adam the agitation of his mind and imploring them to do justice to his feelings, sent the two last to Camelford House to inform Lord Grey and Lord Grenville that,

<sup>1</sup> Then Dr. Vaughan.—V.H.

[George III.'s principal medical attendant.]

in consequence of the report of physicians and the probability of the King's recovery, he had resolved not to remove the Ministers; he expressed his hopes that the two Lords would approve of his determination and his sense of the disinterested as well as judicious advice they had given. He afterwards saw them, Mr. Ponsonby, myself, and others; referred his determination merely and exclusively to the report of the King's health, which, whether true or false, would, he said, subject him to so much reproach if he did anything to aggravate his disorder, that he must continue for a while with men whom he hated and despised. He then proceeded to abuse them without measure, and in many particulars without justice, declaring that he never had and never could "break bread" in the house of any one of them. His public reception of Mr. Perceval with the resolution of the two Houses was not only cold but offensive. When a Privy Council was held at Carlton House and he took the oath of Regency, the bust of Mr. Fox was ostentatiously displayed in the apartment.

In his letter to Mr. Perceval announcing his determination to preserve him in office, he pointedly declared that an apprehension of interfering with the progress of his father's recovery was the consideration which *alone* dictated that decision. He lamented the situation in which the Regency Bill had placed him, said of it that it was most difficult to reconcile it to the principles of the Constitution, and broadly hinted throughout that nothing but peculiar circumstances could have brought him to any communication or concert with men so obnoxious to him. They, however, lacked some of that high and jealous honour which distinguished Lord Grey, and were not so alive as Lord Grenville to the

necessity of preserving the constitutional relation of Prince and Ministry in all its purity. Foreseeing the practical consequences of their temporary continuance in office, they submitted without a murmur to the indignity of being disavowed and reviled. They consoled themselves with the prospect of riveting their power, either by intimidating or cajoling the person who, in the first instance, conferred it upon them so ungraciously and so reluctantly.

Such seems to me the solution of their conduct. With respect to the Prince Regent, I am inclined to believe that the motives he alleged had really some weight in determining him, though some that he suppressed had as much or more. Persons, indeed, have carried their refinement in suspicion so far as to imagine that the Queen's letter, the interviews with Lord Grey and Lord Grenville and with their friends, and the rudeness to Mr. Perceval, were all parts of a scheme, concerted like the plot of a comedy with the Duke of Cumberland, the Lord Chancellor, the Queen, and the Prince Regent; and that the resolution to connect himself with those whom he affected to style his enemies was taken very early, and produced by the high offers which Mr. Perceval made in the arrangement for the Household, and by the suggestions which the Royal Family, and even the mad King himself, were instructed to make to him during the fortnight in which Lord Grey and Lord Grenville were occupied in preparing a Ministry. Such duplicity is surely incredible, especially as it would have been unnecessary. It is, however, true that the old King's wishes on one important point were urged by himself in an interview with the Prince Regent, *viz.*, on the reinstatement of the Duke of York. The facility with which the Ministers engaged



to comply with that measure formed a strong contrast, in the mind of the Regent, with the scruples and hesitations of Lord Grey and Lord Grenville on the subject.

Whether he ascribed the backwardness of the two Lords to want of will or want of power, he drew, no doubt, an inference unfavourable to the Whigs, as either from principle less compliant with the wishes of a Court, or from the state of parties less capable of promoting them. The position into which the Regent had cast himself, whether from design or accident, was, while it lasted, peculiarly adapted to secure the gratification of any personal object he had in view. One party was full of devices to obtain his favour; the other, of forbearance not to forfeit it. This did not escape the friends of the Duke of York; and Lord Lauderdale, in particular, saw the advantage of the conjuncture for obtaining his reinstatement. He urged that measure, which in all sincerity he thought just and wise, with more warmth of friendship to the Duke than consideration for the interests of the party to which he belonged. He persuaded others, and perhaps himself, that by allowing it to be accomplished during that intermediate state of Ministry and Opposition, the Whigs might escape the unpopularity of doing it with the public and the odium of resisting it with the Prince Regent. Mr. Sheridan, with more shrewdness and pleasantry, advised the Regent to wait till his father's predicted recovery should enable him to resume his functions, and then to urge *him* to adopt the measure.

The Duke of York behaved with dignity, delicacy, and propriety. He avowed his hopes of ultimate reinstatement, but he deprecated so unpopular an act at the commencement of his brother's administra-

tion of affairs. The Regent, however, urged by his family, encouraged by his Ministers, prompted by his pride, and swayed by some generosity of affection, replaced him.

Lord Milton,<sup>1</sup> against the wishes of many of our party, moved an address in censure of this step. He divided only 47. It must be acknowledged that among that small number were to be found some of the best names in the House of Commons.

The impression made on the Regent by Lord Grenville's reluctance, Mr. Perceval's cordial support, and Lord Milton's open opposition, to a measure vindicating the honour of his family and earnestly desired by himself, was, no doubt, like that avowed by King William to the Duke of Wharton. "After all," said King William, "the Tories are the best Ministers for a King." "Yes," replied the Duke, "but Your Majesty is not King of the Tories."<sup>2</sup> It was the endeavour of Mr. Perceval to preclude the application of such a reply, and to make the Regent as much King of the Tories as of the Whigs; and in that endeavour he signally succeeded. The Regent kept up for some time his usual habits of private intercourse with members of the Opposition. He dined at Lord Grey's upon his own invitation. He there authorised Lord Hutchinson to insinuate his good wishes, if not actually to use his name, in canvassing the Irish Peerage in favour of Lord Leitrim, the Whig candidate for a representative seat in the House of Lords, then vacant. His situation, as it respected

<sup>1</sup> [Charles William, Viscount Milton (1786—1857). He succeeded his father as Earl Fitzwilliam in 1833.]

<sup>2</sup> Lord Dartmouth, in his notes to Burnett, ascribes [this repartee to some other Whig lord. No matter who said it, the saying is good, illustrates much of the private and party history of this country, and is, I think, applicable to the passage which I have been relating.—V.H.]

our party, was indeed most anomalous. When he avowed any hostility to his ostensible Ministers, we were bound by the fundamental principles of our party to condemn his conduct as unconstitutional; when he betrayed any approbation of them, we were not backward in stigmatising his conduct as unsteady, insincere, and deceitful to us. Such a state of things could not last, and his cordiality with the Whigs, whether real or affected in the outset, visibly declined during the summer. I have been prolix in relating the facts, and rigidly scrupulous in conveying my impression of the motives of the Prince Regent, because I am satisfied that his character will be judged by posterity, or at least that portion of posterity which forms the future political circle of England, with reference to his conduct during this period of his life.

A letter from General FitzPatrick<sup>1</sup> to his brother Lord Ossory proves that experienced observers formed upon the same data a different judgment, and as it is more favourable to His Royal Highness than my own, I subjoin it, that his reputation may have the benefit of so indulgent a testimony from a man of acknowledged sagacity and honour, accurately informed, and not swayed by any prepossession in his favour.

*Thursday.*

DEAR BROTHER,

I have had two very long audiences at Carlton House, and have consequently been let into the minute details of *all* that has passed, as well as *all* the letters, papers, etc., that have been written in the course of the transactions that have preceded the Prince's final determination not to make any change

<sup>1</sup> [General the Hon. Richard FitzPatrick (1748—1813), Lord Holland's uncle.]



in the Government. Much as I was prepossessed that his decision had been wrong, both with respect to his own character, to the public interests, and towards the persons to whom he had given his confidence, I must confess that he has succeeded in convincing me that under the very particular and unexampled difficulties of his situation, he has adopted the only line of conduct he possibly could, without exposing himself to the most odious imputations of destroying the sanguine hopes of his father's recovery and even endangering his life, in order to establish an inefficient and feeble Government, probably of very short duration, and of no power to act with any real advantage to the public interests, or to face or struggle with any of the difficulties which threaten the security of the *chose publique* from all quarters. In taking this resolution, however, though he cannot be justly charged with having departed from the rules of honour or *bonne foi*, it is certainly unfortunate for himself that he did not make a more early communication of it to those to whom he had given his confidence, as it throws upon his conduct the appearance of weakness, unsteadiness, and failure in point of firmness, to which many will be more inclined to ascribe it than to the motives of filial duty and affection upon which he himself entirely founds it. This decision they themselves (I mean the two G.G.'s)<sup>1</sup> had recommended at an earlier period in case of a prospect of speedy recovery: and that case is now represented to the Prince to be arrived. Upon the whole, however, it is evident that he is the victim of a Court intrigue, managed by the Queen and the Ladies of Windsor, a treacherous brother—the D. of C.,<sup>2</sup> and an intriguing, meddling physician.

He is, in his present temper, as much indisposed and, in his heart, as adverse to his Ministers as possible; but how long this disposition may endure is somewhat doubtful, for if the King be really so far recovered as to become an actor in the conspiracy himself, he will be as tractable as they can wish him. If you are inclined not to give him credit for all the filial piety he professes, his anxiety to do what his father will

<sup>1</sup> Lords Grey and Grenville.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> Cumberland.—V.H.

approve is (whether through fear or affection) excessive. He is already in the full conviction that the King, having been made acquainted with the state of things, has expressed his perfect reliance upon the Prince of Wales doing whatever is most right and proper in his situation. I believe all the physicians do sincerely think the recovery probable, though perhaps not, as Halford has said, highly so in *three months*; but surely it does appear most strange that the Chancellor and Perceval should be permitted to see and talk upon business with him, and one of the physicians hold an intercourse upon politics with him, when he is not sufficiently recovered to be allowed to see the Queen or any one of his family. The leaders of Opposition suppress their disappointment (if they feel any), as becomes them. As to the number of guests who were invited and ready to fall to with craving appetites, it is natural they should feel a little as Sancho did upon the physicians ordering every dish to be removed from the table. As none of the feast would have come to my share, I could, of course, feel no disappointment. You do me justice in believing that I needed no great stock of philosophy to be contented with *otium* even *sine dignitate*, excepting that of closing my political career—what the course of my life seemed little to have fitted me for—an independent Knight of the Shire<sup>1</sup> in the House of Commons. My love to all your house. I rejoice to hear V. S.<sup>2</sup> is going on well.

Yours affectly.

R. F.

General FitzPatrick had refused all office on the ground of his declining health. He retained his good sense and pleasant conversation, but he suspected that the vigour of his mind was somewhat impaired. The above letter certainly betrays a facility of belief in the professions of the great, for which in his more active days he was by no means remarkable.

I now return to the events of Parliament in the Session of 1811.

<sup>1</sup> Bedfordshire.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> Vernon Smith, his nephew, then ill at Ampthill Park.—V.H.

A circular letter was written by Mr. Secretary Pole<sup>1</sup> to the magistrates of Ireland, requiring them to arrest and commit to prison such persons as had published any notice for electing any delegate or representative to a Catholic Convention, styled in the said circular, in virtue of an Irish Act of 33 Geo. III., an unlawful assembly.<sup>2</sup> The Act, however, authorised no such proceeding, though it made electing such a Convention, or voting in it, a misdemeanour. The doctrine and practice inculcated and recommended in this circular raised many of those questions which were afterwards more ably urged and better understood, in 1817, on the motion of Lord Grey on the circular of Lord Sidmouth. The legal part of the question was touched upon in our debates, but I was not sufficiently informed or confident enough in my own opinion to do it full justice. However, I entered a short protest on the Journals, in which the power of a magistrate to hold to bail for a misdemeanour, which does not amount to a breach of the peace, is peremptorily denied. It is not printed in the Registers, but it was approved of by that cautious lawyer, Sir Arthur Pigott; and Lord Chancellor Eldon acknowledged to me in private that the law of Secretary Pole's letter was indefensible, and he even called it "*slovenly*" on his legs.

There was in the measure some appearance of a design to involve the Government of the Regent as soon as possible in an altercation with the Roman Catholic body, but Mr. Wellesley Pole was not likely to be a party to such a design; and as the most anti-Catholic members of the Administration disdained all

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Wellesley Pole, afterwards Lord Maryborough, brother to the Duke of Wellington.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [The letter is given in the *Annual Register* for 1811, p. 12.]



previous knowledge of the proceeding, it is reasonable to infer that such a suspicion, though plausible, was not justified by the fact.

During the greater part of the Session of Parliament I was employed in a Committee to inquire into the circumstances of the death of one *Culver*, a debtor, in the Marshalsea prison. There were strong suspicions that the wretched man had been starved to death. The evidence given before our Committee was so indistinct and contradictory that we could not agree on a report; and the mere evidence which we did report did not lead to any further Parliamentary proceeding, either in the treatment of the deceased prisoner or the conduct of the Coroner's jury. The exposure, however, of the state of the prison, which was in ruin, and where persons convicted of the most disgusting offences were associated with the unfortunate debtors during the day and then shut up with one another during the night, led no doubt to the speedy completion of a new prison. Such a building had been declared necessary many years before, but more progress was made in the course of the ensuing twelve months than in twelve years preceding the inquiry.

As some prospect of a change of Ministry still existed, I was anxious to pledge myself, and such others as were willing to support me, to some revision of the proceedings in cases of libel. The *ex officio* informations<sup>1</sup> are indefensible in reason and very liable to abuse. If the Whigs obtained the Ministry, I thought they might, and I was sure they ought to, regulate

<sup>1</sup> [*Ex officio* informations are those filed by the Attorney-General in virtue of his office, without applying to the court, where they are filed, for leave, or giving the defendant an opportunity of showing cause why they should not be filed (*Cabinet Lawyer*).]

and perhaps to suppress them, according to the original intention at the Revolution of 1688. When parties, however, are in office, though they may be sincerely determined never to abuse, they are seldom disposed voluntarily to surrender or curtail any of their powers, unless in a manner compelled to do so by recent declarations in favour of such reforms. I wished so to compel them. As I had sat in Cabinet with Lord Ellenborough,<sup>1</sup> and, though not blind to his defects, enjoyed his conversation in private society, and respected some talents and many virtues in his public character, I hoped and laboured, in moving for a return of the *ex officio* informations, to avoid every topic or even phrase which could irritate his temper, so sore on everything that distantly approached a reflection on the practice of his Court. I failed in my endeavours. He treated me with intolerable rudeness, which I was obliged to repel with equal asperity and, I think, with much greater success.

We never afterwards had any altercation in public, and we both retained a certain good-will and respect for one another; but the language which passed produced a degree of estrangement which, I believe, we both lamented, but which we were both too proud to correct. He was a man of an honest but violent temper, of profound rather than various learning, of powerful but not persuasive eloquence, of strong but by no means of enlarged understanding. If he was not quite so intrepid or so inflexible as he would have had us believe, so neither was he so harsh

<sup>1</sup> [Edward Law, first Baron Ellenborough (1750—1818). Lord Chief Justice from 1802 till the year of his death. Charles Greville, in his *Memoirs*, repeats an amusing story of his treatment of counsel in his court. "A man was opening his speech, and said, 'My Lord, my unfortunate client,' and then repeated the words again. 'Go on, sir,' said Lord Ellenborough, 'the court is with you so far.'"]

or ill-natured as he appeared. Sarcasms and invectives were always on his lips; but they were the accidental effervescence of spleen, impatience, or wit, not the sediments of malignity, from which his heart was generally clear. One of his defects was a habit of complaining of the insufficiency of his income and the narrowness of his circumstances. He was never sparing of expense; and yet he has recently (I write in 1819) left a considerable fortune, which proves his profits to have been not only ample but splendid.

Lord Sidmouth, to ingratiate himself with the Church, had introduced a bill to deprive Dissenting Ministers of their exemption from serving in the Militia, unless they could procure a certificate from respectable householders belonging to their congregation. On the first notice I sounded the alarm on the hazard of meddling with the Toleration Act. The appeal was heard, and his Lordship's bill, which was held in abhorrence by the Methodists, served only to display the numbers and improve the organisation of that powerful sect. For some days no places were to be had in the stage coaches and diligences of the kingdom; all were occupied with petitions to Parliament against the measure proposed by Lord Sidmouth. On the day fixed for the debate such innumerable petitions were presented by Lord Grey, Lord Erskine, Lord Stanhope, myself, and others, that not only the table was filled, but the House was filled with parchment. The peers could hardly get to the doors, the avenues were so crowded with men of grave deportment and puritanical aspect; when there, they had almost equal difficulty in gaining their seats, for loads of parchment encumbered and obstructed their way to them. Lord Sidmouth, with a



bad grace, was obliged to yield. In the result, religious liberty was a gainer. To pacify the alarms which had been raised and the passions which had been excited, several important concessions were successively granted in subsequent Sessions to the various Protestant Dissenters of England.

Many of their leading men came to thank me in person. All I requested of them, in return, was to assist me in extending to any other class of Dissenters the full enjoyment of their civil and political rights. They promised they would do so; and when in 1812 and 1813 I claimed their promise in favour of the Roman Catholic Dissenters, I found them as good as their word.

Parliament this year showed an inclination to discountenance flogging in the Army. A clause to substitute at discretion imprisonment for that degrading and cruel punishment was introduced into the Mutiny Bill. This tardy and imperfect triumph of mercy over cruelty and of reason over habit and prejudice was in a very great degree owing to the zealous and disinterested exertions, though occasionally ill-timed, of Sir Francis Burdett. He had, at all times, the great merit of feeling with sincerity and expressing without fear great indignation and horror of all personal cruelty and oppression. This and a sweetness of temper and manner were his best, perhaps his only good, qualities in public life. In political intercourse with individuals or parties he was, chiefly from facility, little to be relied upon. His opinions, whenever they were intelligible, were equally repugnant to reason and subversive of all free or, at least, of all Parliamentary Government. He hated the Whigs and the Revolution as much as the abuses in our representation, and more than any

prerogatives of the Crown ; and would have reduced the functions of the House of Commons, even if modelled to his theory of excellence, to the two functions of granting money to the Crown and occasionally impeaching a Minister for corrupt or illegal practices.

The remainder of the Session was chiefly occupied with discussions on the state of our circulation and questions relating to paper and bullion. The merit of Mr. Horner in the investigation of this intricate subject, and still more in his honest, zealous, and firm maintenance of those principles which he was satisfied were sound, can hardly be appreciated, now that the prejudices he had to contend with have expired, and the truths he combated for have proved victorious upon experience and are generally admitted as incontrovertible and even obvious.<sup>1</sup> So far was this from being the case at the time, that his doctrines were deemed theoretical and visionary, and his conduct impracticable, hazardous to the country, and ruinous to himself. He seemed to sacrifice the fairest objects of ambition, and to incur at the outset of his public life the private enmity of large bodies of men and great unpopularity with the public, by a patient, diligent, and determined inquiry into matters which, little attractive in their nature, led him, as he well knew, to conclusions unpalatable to powerful individuals as well as to the Bank and the Government.

<sup>1</sup> ["The general tenour of his speech (that of Mr. Horner on May 6) was to show that the paper currency of the country had undergone an actual depreciation, and that the only remedy was to provide for the resumption of cash payments at the bank as speedily as possible."—*Annual Register*, 1811.

The report of the Parliamentary Committee on bullion, of which Mr. Horner was president and Mr. (afterwards Sir Robert) Peel was a member, was to the same effect, *i.e.* that paper issues were always liable to depreciation unless they were at any time convertible into gold.]

He foresaw that his opinions on this subject must lose him the seat in Parliament which he then held.

Such was the repugnance felt at that time to doctrines now universally approved, that I was assured by Lord Lansdowne that the borough of Calne would hardly have chosen the Chairman of the Bullion Committee for their representative, even if he had been supported by that recommendation to which on all other occasions they have uniformly deferred. The dread of the consequences of fair dealing and honesty, or rather the persuasion of the convenience of paying for everything in fluctuating and depreciated paper, was not confined to the vulgar. All the supporters of the war, and some who, without approving its origin, profited by the spirit of speculation to which its continuance gave occasion, were for preserving a hazardous and dishonest system which, according to the fashionable jargon of that day, afforded "such facilities to the operations of the State."

Lord King,<sup>1</sup> who thoroughly understood the whole subject of exchanges and currency, devised a method by no means ill calculated to defeat the system and disconcert its supporters. He determined to enforce the strict letter of his leases, and call for the payment of rent in the lawful coin of the kingdom. Injudiciously for his object, he sent a circular to that purpose to his tenants, while Parliament was yet sitting. The question was thus brought in the first instance before a tribunal competent to make or alter the law, instead of one which had no authority but to enforce it. Lord Stanhope, by some accident, obtained very early intelligence of this proceeding. He was a zealous promoter of the paper system,

<sup>1</sup>[Peter, seventh Lord King (1776—1833). His eldest son, who succeeded him, was created Earl of Lovelace.]





*Peter, Lord King*



with views very different from those entertained or professed by its other advocates. He was the first to call the attention of Parliament to the consequences of Lord King's demand on his tenants. The bill he presented to the House of Lords, without actually declaring banknotes legal tender, deprived the creditor, to whom they were offered in payment, of all legal remedy whatever. The measure, though entirely altered in form, received in substance the sanction of Parliament. Had Lord King postponed his circular a few weeks longer, either two prices would have been established in the markets, all the facilities, as they were called, annihilated, or the Parliament would have been called upon to interfere in the matter, in a case where no political object could have been imputed to those who exacted their rights.

Lord Chesterfield, a man of very large landed property, blindly attached to the politics of the Court, but living in some measure in retirement from it, was on the point of issuing a similar demand on his tenantry, when Lord King's operations brought the subject before the public. Lord Stanhope, who had panegyricised the system of *assignats* in France, very consistently liked the banknotes in England; and when I told him that he expected them to have the same effect in England, he whispered, with a suppressed chuckle, in my ear: "And if they take property from the drones and give it to the bees, where, my dear *Citoyen*, is the great harm of that?" He had also invented an ingenious device for preventing forgeries. He always delighted in the application of science to any political purposes. The hopes of that experiment being adopted very possibly inflamed his zeal in support of a paper currency.

The Prince Regent (whether from real ignorance of



the question, from dread of unpopularity, or, as is most probable, from an incipient disposition to court his Ministers and detach himself from Opposition, I know not) disliked the prospect of any resumption of cash payments. Though originally averse to the Spanish expeditions and perhaps to the cause of the insurgents, who mixed too much of the froth, at least, if not of the essence, of liberty in their productions to make them palatable to princely appetites, he grew by degrees interested in the war from the successes in Portugal and from the discussion of military details and promotions, always delightful to Royal ears.

This growing inclination to prosecute the war with vigour tended, no doubt, to reconcile him to his Ministers in preference to their opponents, though it failed to secure his support of Lord Wellesley in his breach with his colleagues on that very subject. His conduct on two affairs of less importance foreboded an approaching alteration in his feelings towards public men, by indicating a disposition in him to accommodate differences with those who were now his official Ministers, but whom he had hitherto termed and thought his personal enemies. The first was the Berkeley Peerage; the other, the claim of Mr. Palmer for remuneration for the invention of mail coaches.

The Prince of Wales had taken a strong interest in establishing the validity of Lord Berkeley's marriage; he had even promised him, before his death, to indemnify his son for any unfavourable decision which might occur, by conferring an earldom upon him whenever it should be in his power.<sup>1</sup> When,

<sup>1</sup> [This famous case was raised by William Berkeley, eldest son of Frederick-Augustus, fifth Earl of Berkeley, on the death of his father in 1810, claiming the titles. He was born in 1786, and though his

however, the claim was heard, though he and the other Royal Princes had been eager in the cause even to indecency, he gradually became colder and colder; when it terminated in a decision<sup>1</sup> against the marriage, he either did not venture or did not choose to renew any promise to the lady or the young man. He was, however, fully justified, perhaps he was really determined, by the detection of falsehoods in Lady Berkeley's testimony and the undeniable exposure of the badness of the case.

Such could not be his motive for withdrawing all his usual countenance and promised support from Mr. Palmer. The claim of that gentleman, containing an implied censure of Mr. Pitt, was always bitterly resisted by that Minister's adherents; but the Prince of Wales had warmly espoused it,

father was not supposed to have married his mother, Mary Cole, until 1796, a secret marriage was alleged to have taken place in 1785. This was, however, proved to be untrue, and the suit was disallowed. William Berkeley was created Earl Fitzhardinge in 1841: his youngest brother, the only son born after the marriage, never took any steps to claim the title of Earl of Berkeley.]

<sup>1</sup> In the course of the cause a question arose whether the declaration or deposition of the late Lord Berkeley could be admitted in evidence. It was referred to the judges; and their solemn opinion was delivered that it could *not*. Never was the force of a phrase more strongly exemplified than on that occasion. Mr. Justice Laurence drew a distinction between declarations made before and after any question had been raised on the subject. In stating the distinction, he borrowed a Latin phrase from the Civil Law, and said that a declaration *post litem motam* could not be admitted. *Lis mota* occurred in every fourth or fifth sentence of every opinion delivered afterwards by the learned judges. The Lords looked wise, and acknowledged in whispers to each other a *lis mota* altered the whole nature of a declaration. The declaration in question was, on this principle, rejected. Yet the phrase *lis mota*, which seemed to awaken all the recollections of the learned, was then mentioned for the first time, and had hitherto been utterly unknown to our law and our lawyers. Even the principle, though perhaps not unreasonable, had never, or at least very seldom, if ever, been recognised in our Courts.—V.H.

and had been active and eager in instigating Colonel Palmer to prosecute it.<sup>1</sup> The claim itself, if not strictly and literally just, was in my judgment irresistible on the honour and policy of the country.<sup>2</sup>

The shrewd in our party left Parliament in the summer of 1811 with more apprehensions of the Prince Regent's designs than confidence in his late professions. If his resolution to exclude the Whigs from office was not actually taken before the Session was closed, I have good reason to believe that even then, or very shortly afterwards, he harboured a project of dividing them, and forming a Ministry composed indiscriminately of various parties in Parliament. There were reports, very soon after the Prorogation, of a rupture between the Prince Regent and Mr. Perceval, and of an endeavour on the part of the Prince to form a Ministry through Lord Wellesley and Mr. Canning. I know not what, nor indeed that anything, passed.

There were, however, symptoms of a disposition in the Court to feel the pulse of individuals in all parties. Mr. Sheridan during the recess saw me frequently, and questioned me much whether the

<sup>1</sup> The business was decided in Parliament, or rather compromised finally elsewhere in 1812, but it was obvious that the zeal of the Prince Regent in the cause of his friend had abated in 1811.—V.H.

[Colonel Palmer, the manager of the Bath Theatre, had, in 1784, after much difficulty, obtained a trial for his scheme of fast mail coaches. Such was its success that, in 1800, the postal revenues were more than trebled. It was at first proposed to grant him  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on a portion of the increase, but this fell through, owing to the opposition of the authorities, and with much difficulty he finally obtained a pension of £3,000 a year and a gratuity of £50,000.]

<sup>2</sup> I have sometimes thought that this book, which is too long, might with due regard to method and perspicuity be divided here. As it stands, however, it embraces all the negotiations between the Prince Regent and the Whigs, and the period included in it is not more than one year and half.—V.H.



Duke of Bedford, myself, and any old Foxite would be disposed to accept of high office in a Government, in the formation of which Lord Grey and Lord Grenville were not chiefly consulted. I discouraged all such projects. I cannot tell how far they were suggestions of his own or concerted with the Prince Regent. I told him explicitly that unless Lord Grey or Lord Grenville, as the heads of our party, or Mr. Ponsonby, as leader of it in the House of Commons, were sent to in the first instance, any offer to bring in the Whigs would appear insidious; that I for one, and probably all men of weight who professed attachment to the principles of Mr. Fox, would have nothing to do with it in that shape. We could not and would not separate from Lord Grenville, after his consistent and honourable conduct. Lord Grey or our leader in the House of Commons were the only other channels through which any offer could with propriety be conveyed to the party. Lord Grey and Lord Grenville had been sent for and actually employed last year. None but Mr. Ponsonby, with a view of confirming his authority in the House of Commons and consulting him in the first instance on the practicability of conducting the business in that assembly, could now be sent for, without the appearance or indeed the reality of an affront to the two Lords, whom the Prince Regent had so recently acknowledged as the heads of the party and the men to whom, on a change, he intended to entrust the management of public affairs. If, therefore, the Prince Regent intended to form an Administration of his old friends the Whigs, he would send directly to one of these three persons. Should he send for any other member of the party, it would obviously indicate a design of weakening the party he affected to favour.

Such was the substance of my answer in more than one conversation which Mr. Sheridan had sought with me.<sup>1</sup>

The Regent, or those immediately about him, had frequent conversations on similar topics with Mr. Adam. Their art, or Mr. Adam's own sanguine nature, completely cajoled him. He was satisfied that an entire change at the expiration of the restrictions was intended. He diligently laboured to impress that conviction upon us all : first, from sincerely believing and wishing it himself, and, secondly, with a view, which always led him too far, of surmounting the difficulty immediately before him, and getting the pecuniary arrangements connected with the Regency passed with little opposition in the ensuing Session of Parliament.

General Fox<sup>2</sup> died in the summer of 1811. He was a kind, affectionate, and reasonable man, without brilliant talents or extraordinary attainments, and with very bounded ambition ; he had opinions on public matters more favourable to freedom than is common in his profession, and a stronger mind than his friends, or perhaps he himself, ever suspected. His professional habits were formed in the school of Sir Guy Carleton<sup>3</sup> and Lord Cornwallis, men who, whatever were their military merits, deserve to be remembered as the first in our army who systematically

<sup>1</sup> When I related the substance of these conversations to Lord Grey, I could not but be diverted with his characteristic and somewhat jealous remark, " There was no use," said he, " in mentioning A. G. Ponsonby ; to such an arrangement there might be many objections. I feel some myself."—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [General the Hon. Henry Edward Fox, Lord Holland's uncle, youngest brother of Charles James Fox. He was born in 1755, and married, in 1786, Marianne, daughter of William Clayton, Esq.]

<sup>3</sup> Lord Dorchester.—V.H.

disclaimed for themselves and discountenanced in others all jobs and embezzlement.

I had at this time no intelligence of the war or of foreign negotiations but such as Gazettes, Parliamentary papers, and common Journals supply. I therefore abstain from relating the events in Spain, and the changes which were gradually taking place in the politics of Russia during the summer and autumn of 1811. I did, indeed, my utmost in private correspondence with Spaniards to soften that jealousy which was naturally, but unwisely and unjustly, felt at our interference.<sup>1</sup>

In the meanwhile the retreat of Massena, though admirably conducted by that General and by Ney, had justified the foresight and relieved the embarrassments of Lord Wellington. Our prospects in the Peninsula were improved. The forced exclusion of all British manufactures from the rest of Europe (the *Continental System*, as it was called), imposed on Russia by intimidation and by the ascendancy which Napoleon fondly imagined he had personally acquired over Alexander, was so much at variance with the interests both of nations and individuals, that even where the Governments were cordially subservient to the views of France, they found it impracticable to maintain so unnatural a policy. Alexander, who had not had the courage to support the interests of his Empire against the pretensions of France, began to discover that even "Autocracy" itself would not enable him to execute treaties which he had been base enough to sign against the obvious

<sup>1</sup> [Rumours were afloat in Spain at this time of a desire to place British officers in command of Spanish troops, and of the possibility of a permanent occupation by the English of certain portions of Spanish territory. A note was delivered to the Cortes by the British Minister, Mr. Wellesley, flatly contradicting these statements.]



policy, wishes, and murmurs of his subjects. The Russians themselves felt the ignominy of submitting to the dictates of a foreign power, though willingly enforced by their Czar, when they discovered that an obedience to those dictates would prevent the sale of their produce and involve the proprietors of land in distress and ruin.

It is singular that while the successful war in Spain and the rupture between Russia and France—the two great sources of the subsequent triumph over Napoleon—were opening themselves in 1811, the only English Minister from whose sagacity either of them in any degree flowed was gradually separating himself from his colleagues. This was Lord Wellesley.<sup>1</sup> As Ambassador and Secretary of State he had given to the councils of Spain and to our military exertions some statesmanlike consistency of design. He had also, with no little dexterity, and (as I have been assured) without consulting his colleagues, detached General Bernadotte, then Crown Prince of Sweden, from his connection with France;<sup>2</sup> he thereby ensured the co-operation of a power which might have intimidated Russia from hostilities with Napoleon, and which did in fact ultimately determine Alexander, when wavering and even yielding, to persevere in resistance to the invaders. Some of his other projects, such as a negotiation for peace with the Police Minister Fouché,

<sup>1</sup> [Richard Colley, Marquess Wellesley (1760—1842), elder brother of the Duke of Wellington; Governor-General of India, 1797—1805; Ambassador at Madrid, 1809; Foreign Secretary, 1809—1812; Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, 1821—1828 and 1833—1834.]

<sup>2</sup> [Sir Archibald Alison claims the initiation of this policy for Lord Castlereagh. Lord Holland's account, however, is more probably correct, for Mr. Thornton, who was in charge of the negotiations, was sent to Sweden five months before Lord Castlereagh's return to office.]

and a foolish scheme of rescuing King Ferdinand from his captivity by means of an adventurer called Kolli,<sup>1</sup> were not equally fortunate or well conceived.

But whatever were the merits or the blemishes of his designs abroad, he was at this time meditating a line of policy at home which would have led to great changes in office—to a renewal of his connection with Mr. Canning, and not improbably to a union between him and the Whigs in power under the Prince Regent. He had more genius than prudence, more spirit than principle, and manifestly despised his colleagues as much as they dreaded him. Unlike most English politicians, he was rather a statesman than a man of business, and more capable of doing extraordinary things well than conducting ordinary transactions with safety or propriety.

He was reported to have ingratiated himself during the summer with the Prince Regent, and with the exception of an unqualified zeal in the prosecution of the Spanish war, the natural growth of his early interest in that contest, and of his connection with Lord Wellington, his opinions on public questions seemed to smooth the way to a coalition with those to whom His Royal Highness was expected to entrust the management of his affairs.<sup>2</sup> When, however, he tendered his resignation early in 1812, he discovered that an inclination to Whigs or to liberal policy was no strong recommendation to the Prince Regent. He learnt with yet more chagrin that his brother would not hazard a rupture with the Ministers, even in support of the remonstrances which he (Lord Wellesley)

<sup>1</sup> Some say he was a relation, and an Irishman. The original name of the Wellesley or Wesley family was Colley.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [His views on the Roman Catholic question also tended to his subsequent resignation. See Appendix B.]

had made, if not at his instigation, at least on his behalf, for further succours and supplies. I know not whether to blame or to commend him. A commander on service is not lightly to lend himself to party in a struggle for power at home. He may, nay, he must, prefer serving under those to whom he is chiefly bound by affection and gratitude and those with whom he cordially agrees and co-operates; but he must not make a national cause subservient to their views of ambition at home, unless he thinks their possession of power not only useful, but indispensably necessary, to its maintenance and its success.

Lord Wellington, therefore, on the turn of fortune in Spain, did right not to sacrifice his own station and growing fame and the national interest to the object of securing or replacing his brother in power, even though that brother should have forfeited it by his zealous exertions to minister to his glory abroad. Who shall blame him for not hesitating between such important public considerations and his own private affections? Possibly, however, Lord Wellesley, and certainly his adherents, were hurt that so little was done by Lord Wellington to avert the necessity of so painful an option. They significantly remarked that the sacrifice was made with so very good a grace, as not only to answer the calls of duty, but to suppress every symptom of pain or reluctance in performing it. Lord Wellesley, to whose partiality and affection his brother had been indebted for his promotion, fame, and success, would have acquired, said his friends, if placed in a similar predicament, the same praise of heroic duty, but it would have cost him much more to obtain it. Whether such insinuations were well founded or not, it is certain that after that period a coolness between the brothers ensued,



and it must be acknowledged that subsequent transactions will not exonerate Lord Wellington of the charges of indifference or want of feeling by proving such defects to be quite foreign to his character.

Lord Wellesley treated Mr. Perceval and the other Ministers with manifest scorn and contempt. In a subsequent altercation between him and Lord Harrowby in the House of Lords, respecting the differences in Cabinet while he remained among them, his superiority in wit, spirit, vigour, and eloquence was most decisive. Yet when, on Lord Boringdon's motion for an efficient Administration, he was expected to vindicate his own motives and conduct, and to explain at large his views of domestic and foreign policy, though he had come down with mighty ostentation, dressed and decorated, as his usage was, for the delivery of a great speech, his nerves failed him entirely, and he allowed the question to go to a division without uttering one word. So universal was the persuasion that he was, on that day, to outdo himself, and so positive was the expectation of his speaking, that some one, on the Chancellor's return from the House, asked, without the ceremony of a previous inquiry whether he had spoken or not, "What was the style of Lord Wellesley's speech?" "I think in that of Tacitus," replied Lord Eldon.

He was, indeed, a most *uncertain* speaker in every sense of the word. After studiously announcing his intentions of speaking, and repeating his views and arguments and illustrations in private to friend and to foe, he not unfrequently sat silent. When he did rise, it was often doubtful which side he would espouse, what topics he would select, and whether he would treat them with ability and eloquence or lapse into frothy, trite, and unmeaning declamation,

or entangle himself in some metaphysical disquisition which he was quite unequal to unravel or expound. His allusions were more classical than apposite, and his language that of a polite scholar even to a fault. His wit was elaborate and far-fetched, but well and neatly executed. He was sometimes illogical, and I have known him pompous, empty, and unsatisfactory. Yet there was a smack, a fancy of greatness in all he did: and though in his speeches, his manners, and his actions he was very open to ridicule, those who smiled and even laughed could not despise him.

He had tendered his resignation in January; it was not accepted till March.<sup>1</sup> While he was yet nominally in office, and before the restrictions on the Regency had expired, Mr. Perceval proposed the Civil List and the regulation of the Household. The arrangement was purposely complicated and infinitely more expensive to the country than the circumstances justified, or than either the party who proposed or the party who acquiesced in could sincerely approve. Mr. Tierney had the honesty to say so, and perhaps had the shrewdness even then to perceive what it now seems strange should have escaped the observation of any man, that the sums granted for the Privy Purse and Household were sufficient, not only to provide for the wants, but to purchase the favour of the Prince Regent. Some semblance, however, of consistency and honour was to be preserved. The Prince Regent was in a manner pledged, on the expiration of the restrictions, to make some overture to the Whigs. He was too well acquainted with the characters of the men with whom he had to deal, and indeed too great an adept in that sort of game, not to devise in a moment a method of

<sup>1</sup> [He delivered up the Seals on February 19th.]

making the offer, which secured its rejection. He wrote the following letter to the Duke of York.<sup>1</sup> . . . . .

Lord Grey and Lord Grenville requested twenty-four hours to consult their friends, and to consider of the answer to the overture contained in the letter above recited from the Prince Regent to the Duke of York. Lord Lansdowne, Lord Lauderdale, Mr. Ponsonby, and myself met them at Mr. Thomas Grenville's, when they produced a written paper, the composition of Lord Grenville, which they proposed to transmit to the Duke of York. The overture contained in the letter to the Duke of York was, as the reader must have perceived, in substance, nothing more than an invitation to Lord Grey and Lord Grenville and some others recommended by them, to accept office with an Administration whose measures and system they had uniformly and strenuously opposed, and whose persons and behaviour the Prince Regent himself, only a year before, had indecently reviled in every company and affected to resent in a manner full as warm as any indignity, purely political, could justify.

The proposed answer was very decisive, but unnecessarily long. It was unadvisedly explicit on every topic which had been artfully introduced into the Prince Regent's letter; in short, it was an elaborate manifesto of the two Lords on all political questions on which they differed with Ministers. It contained a sort of creed on the

<sup>1</sup> [The letter is published in the *Annual Register* for 1812, p. 329. After a lengthy dissertation on the state of affairs at the moment when he became Regent, the Prince discussed the danger of any sudden change of Administration in the critical state of the war, but hoped that his former friends would combine with the Ministers to form a really powerful Government. He asked the Duke of York to convey this expression of his views to Lords Grey and Grenville.]



Spanish war, the Orders in Council, the paper system, and the Roman Catholic claims, to which none but their own friends, and not all of them, could implicitly have subscribed. The Prince Regent's letter was no doubt framed with a design of provoking the two Lords to recapitulate opinions which the writer, whoever he was, thought to be impracticable and knew to be unpopular.

The prospect of their accession to power had been contemplated with some apprehension by those who felt zealous in the cause and gratified by the glories of the Spanish war. Such persons had been confirmed in their apprehensions, by the very injudicious language of some of Lord Grenville's connections, as well as by enemies<sup>1</sup> who studiously repeated such language and industriously circulated the report that the first consequence of their elevation to power would be the recall of every British soldier from the Peninsula. The notion of resuming cash payments was, at that time, to the full as unpopular. Speculators, who profited by a system of improvident dishonesty and lavish expenditure, affected to regard the principles of

<sup>1</sup> I allude particularly to Mr. Southey,<sup>a</sup> who should have found in the recollection of early kindnesses received from Mr. Charles Williams Wynn,<sup>b</sup> when he was himself accused of obnoxious and Jacobinical principles and not in affluent circumstances, some motives for suppressing or softening rather than promulgating and exaggerating any hasty or unguarded declarations which that gentleman might have made to him in the heat of argument or in the warmth and confidence of friendship. But Mr. Southey seemed about that time tired of opinions which led to no worldly advantages, and angry with all Whigs because those among them who were critics were not boundless in their admiration of all his poetical effusions.—V.H.

<sup>a</sup> [Robert Southey (1774—1843), the poet.]

<sup>b</sup> [Charles Watkin Williams Wynn (1775—1850), a nephew of Lord Grenville and Under-Secretary for the Home Department in the Ministry of "all the talents." He settled a small allowance on Southey, which was to continue until he was able to obtain a pension for him from Government.]

the Bullion Committee<sup>1</sup> as purely chimerical, and the statesmen who espoused them as sacrificing the national prosperity to the theories of political economists.

In their first sketch of an answer the two Lords fell into the snare prepared for them. They avowed all these opinions so unpalatable to the public, and they enforced them in an authoritative tone little calculated to soothe or to convince. In the views insinuated about the Spanish alliance and war, I for one could not have concurred. The unqualified declaration of their principles respecting both our currency and trade, though perfectly sound, seemed highly unreasonable; and the authoritative tone in which they announced their views would have exposed them to the censure of exacting an implicit compliance with all their opinions from the Court and the public, at a time when both were avowedly desirous of softening down differences, for the purpose of forming what is called a strong, but often proves to be a very weak, Administration. Lord Lansdowne, with his usual judgment, perceived the impolicy of so copious a manifesto, and, with more than his usual energy, urged the necessity of shortening the letter and confining the grounds of refusal to that which formed the most obvious and insurmountable bar to a coalition between Mr. Perceval and the Whigs, *viz.*, their opposite views of the Roman Catholic question and the system of government in Ireland. Accordingly the following answer was drawn up and afterwards delivered by Lords Grey and Grenville to the Duke of York. . . .<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [See *ante*, p. 103.]

<sup>2</sup> [The letter appears on p. 331 of the *Annual Register* for 1812. The reasons for their refusal to take office with the Ministers were based entirely on the advice given them by Lord Lansdowne.]

The Duke of York took minutes of the conversation which occurred on the two Lords delivering this answer in writing to him. He very candidly submitted those minutes to their inspection, and they made such explanations and comments on the Duke's report of what they said, as precluded the possibility of a misunderstanding. The Duke contended that the letter was not an overture to them to form a part of Mr. Perceval's Administration, or even to coalesce with that gentleman as Minister, but to concur in forming a new Administration on a broad basis; and he urged, as a proof of his view of the subject, that he had been selected to convey the communication, in order that the person so employed might not be designated as the head of the new Administration. These distinctions, immaterial in themselves, were set aside by Lord Grey observing that the answer given was to the written statement which they had seen, and if it should appear to the Prince Regent that they had misunderstood the meaning of that paper, he might rectify the mistake. In the meanwhile they adhered to their answer. Here ended the negotiation. Lord Castlereagh was in a few days appointed Secretary of State in the place of Lord Wellesley.<sup>1</sup>

The answer of Lord Grey and Lord Grenville, and the tone and temper in which it was conveyed, were very generally approved of. Many no doubt rejoiced at so open a breach between them and the Prince Regent, and none probably more than His Royal Highness himself. Yet friend and foe, Whig and Tory, directly or indirectly acknowledged that to such an overture no other answer could have been given with honour. The form was yet more

<sup>1</sup> [For Foreign Affairs.]



unobjectionable. The language, however, of the party, and possibly of some of the leaders, was not perhaps equally irreproachable and certainly not equally judicious. In conversations, speeches, and publications there was much personal asperity and some indecorous satire and invective. Those who had early opportunities of studying the character of the Prince should have known that personal slights were more deeply felt and more certainly resented by him than real indignities, injuries, or ill-usage.

His more recent acquaintances had sagacity enough to discover that secret very soon, and dexterity enough to act upon it. They bore tales of much that was said, and of more that was never said, to his disparagement by the principal characters in Opposition. Studiously directing his attention to the numberless lampoons that appeared, they affixed to each whatever name it was most their interest to render obnoxious. I knew more than one instance of persons passing at Carlton House for the authors or instigators of the very epigrams or paragraphs they had deprecated, lamented, and condemned. Lord Grey unquestionably felt great indignation. Ever open, artless, and impetuous, he could not stop to conceal it. The coarse and unmannerly phrases imputed to him were, indeed, never uttered; but his unguarded exposure of the Prince Regent's duplicity in all companies, and his severe animadversion in the House of Lords on the defection of Lord Cholmondeley and the few insignificant sycophants who followed him, sank deep in the Royal mind. The new Court was henceforward *to the full as intent as the old one* on excluding the Whigs from all office, favour, or power.

Although the offences of Lord Grey, owing to the

high station he filled in the eyes of men, were more important, and, owing to early personal jealousies between him and the Prince of Wales, were less easily pardoned than those of others, such indiscretions were not confined to him. We all incurred the guilt, if not the odium, of charging His Royal Highness with ingratitude and perfidy. We all encouraged every species of satire against him and his mistress. He retorted in language to the full as unmeasured, and in assertions much more unfounded. He drove Lord Lauderdale to the necessity, first, of remonstrating with him, and afterwards, of absenting himself, by bursting forth suddenly, intemperately, and violently against his political friends—a scene rendered memorable by having excited the tears of the young Princess Charlotte, who was present, and yet more so by those tears becoming the subject of Lord Byron's verse.<sup>1</sup>

That extraordinary young man had satirised and ridiculed me, in common with many others, in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, under a very erroneous impression that I had written or caused to be written the criticism on his first publication in the *Edinburgh Review*<sup>2</sup>; whereas it was from that printed *Review* that I first learnt the existence of the poems, or indeed of the author, whose title I had thought was extinct. My friend Mr. Rogers

<sup>1</sup> "Weep, daughter of a Royal line," etc., etc.

The stanzas are printed, and to be found in his works.—V.H.

[The incident took place at a banquet at Carlton House on February 22, 1812. According to the account printed in the *Courier*, the Prince Regent expressed his "surprise and mortification" at Lords Grey and Grenville's unfavourable reply to the Duke of York's letter. Lord Lauderdale thereupon made it clear, in somewhat brusque language, that the sentiments of the two Lords reflected exactly the disposition of the whole Whig party, and that he himself had given his cordial assent to their answer.]

<sup>2</sup> It was written by Mr. Brougham.—V.H.

knew this circumstance; he asked me if I objected to his repeating it to Lord Byron. I answered: "Far from it, provided he repeated it as he had heard it from me, a fact related in accidental conversation, and not a message or explanation sent from me to Lord Byron." Mr. Rogers soon afterwards informed me that Lord Byron wished to speak in Parliament against the Frame-breaking Bill, and that he was anxious to learn the forms and to consult some peer in Opposition. Mr. Rogers asked me if I would allow him to introduce me to the young poet. I willingly and warmly acquiesced, gave him what assistance I could, and received from him a very handsome and well-written letter. His speech was full of fancy, wit, and invective, but not exempt from affectation nor well reasoned, nor at all suited to our common notions of Parliamentary eloquence. His fastidious and artificial taste and his over-irritable temper would, I think, have prevented him from ever excelling in Parliament.

This accidental intercourse about his first speech led to our acquaintance and even friendly familiarity, which was never interrupted. I have mentioned it because everything relating to him excites curiosity; and the uniformly courteous, I might almost say grateful, manner in which he acknowledged and returned my trifling services, amounting to little more than ordinary civility, shows a sensibility and kindness for imaginary favours in one who was unhappily too often suspected, with reason, of an extreme susceptibility to slight, and even imaginary, injuries. His speech and his verses on Princess Charlotte's tears fixed his politics, and he was<sup>1</sup> upon system invariably attached to the party

<sup>1</sup> I have altered this passage from "hitherto has been" to "was," for since I originally wrote it in 1821 the great poetical genius of



and principles of the Whigs. Mr. Rogers himself, on the unexpected conduct of the Prince Regent, put one of the many witty epigrams he is in the habit of uttering into verse, and the lines found their way into the newspapers. Another poet, Mr. Moore, with more party zeal and Irish humour than worldly prudence, parodied the Prince Regent's letter to the Duke of York. His friend, Lord Moira, approved of the conduct of Lord Grey and Lord Grenville in declining the overture; he even drew out an answer, which he wished them to adopt and communicated to me for that purpose. It required, indeed, some further explanation; but it insisted, even in a more authoritative tone than the paper they sent, on the impossibility of their *entering into the Cabinet* of a Ministry whose measures they had uniformly *reprobated*.

The two Irish brothers Lord Donoughmore and Lord Hutchinson kept no measures with the Court. The Regent was so exasperated at their language, that he affected to lament that he was not a private man and able to call one of them at least to account for a personal affront. Perhaps a more accurate knowledge of that family's proficiency in pistols might, on reflection, reconcile His Royal Highness to the privations of his exalted station.

The unfortunate breach between the Roman Catholics of Ireland and their able supporter Lord Grenville, effected by the machinations of Dr. Milner,<sup>1</sup> who had shamelessly disavowed him, had rendered it necessary to place the petitions of that body in other hands.

whom it treats has terminated his short and irregular, but brilliant, career in a place and in circumstances (and perhaps at a period of life) fortunate for his literary and political fame. He was perhaps the shortest, but surely not the least, miracle of our age.—V.H.

<sup>1</sup> [John Milner, D.D. (1752—1826), Bishop of Castabala and Vicar-Apostolic in the West of England.]

Lord Grey, I believed, had declined them some time before; and when I was sounded on the subject I told them that, if offered, I should not refuse them; but that for my sake, and still more for their own, I wished them to deliver their petitions to some one less connected with Lord Grenville and more disposed to approve of, as well as not to combat, their objections to the veto<sup>1</sup> and to the restrictions, which topic would not improbably be introduced into the debate.

They pitched on Lord Donoughmore, the representative of that Protestant family which had first and most uniformly espoused their cause, and one who at the time of the Union and at the formation of Lord Fitzwilliam's Administration had been, as I believe, the channel of communication between them and the Government. He accepted the commission of pleading their cause in Parliament with cheerfulness, and he executed it with considerable ability. If in judgment there was some deficiency, there was an abundant supply of that which Irishmen and Roman Catholics value more—spirit and even violence. His personalities to the Regent and to Lady Hertford were, somewhat too coarse for our English palates; but his excuse of so great a breach of decorum was this. He had been twice the channel to convey direct or implicit promises which had been violated, and to excite expectations which had been disappointed. Had he submitted a third time, without open and unqualified hostility to those who had deceived him, he thought his own honour might be questioned by his countrymen. He preferred deserving the reproach of rudeness and indelicacy to incurring even the

<sup>1</sup> [The chief question was whether the English Government should have a right of veto on the appointment of Catholic Bishops in the United Kingdom.]

suspicion of duplicity and treachery. Whatever be the value of such an apology, the Irish Catholics so far justified his speculations that they warmly applauded his vehemence and personality, and in *an evil hour for themselves* embodied the most offensive passages of his speech into resolutions at their various meetings throughout Ireland. Some years afterwards their writers in Ireland most falsely attributed this conduct to the instigation of their Parliamentary friends in England. I believe that neither Lord Grey, Lord Grenville, Lord Lansdowne, myself, Mr. Ponsonby, Mr. Grattan, Mr. Tierney, Mr. Canning, nor any one active Member of Parliament, had the slightest intimation of their intention to propose such intemperate resolutions; I am sure that we one and all lamented and condemned them when adopted.

Even those among us who were most indignant at the conduct of the Prince Regent felt that it was not good policy in the Roman Catholics to express their sense of it too warmly, much less in the coarse, revolting, and scurrilously personal libel. In the Commons Mr. Grattan was more temperate as well as more eloquent, but not much more successful. The majorities of both Houses, though not very great, and weakened by the loss of Lord Wellesley and his few adherents, showed that in the opinion of politicians the Prince Regent had joined the Anti-Catholic faction, or that Mr. Perceval had contrived to fix himself permanently in power. He seemed, indeed, determined to exact a yet stronger proof of the attachment of his followers, by insisting on their adherence to the Orders in Council,<sup>1</sup> which were

<sup>1</sup> [These Orders in Council were issued in 1807, in order to counteract Napoleon's Berlin and Milan decrees against British commerce. Any ship bound for a port in the French dominions was



involving us in hostilities with North America, ruining our commerce, and impoverishing our manufacturers in a way that excited universal distress and clamour, and threatened to produce defalcation in our revenue and insurrection in the country.

But this infatuated course of policy was suddenly arrested by one of those unforeseen events which, springing from small, private, and unconnected causes, have, in their consequences, the greatest effect on the fate of nations and [the] happiness of mankind. A madman of the name of Bellingham had been, or thought he had been, aggrieved by some of our public agents abroad. He was full of resentment at the supposed injury, and yet more at the neglect with which his importunate remonstrances had been treated by persons in power and their respective offices in England. If his own account is to be trusted, he devoted some person in high rank and office as an atonement for his wrongs; but was nearly indifferent on whom answering that description his vengeance might fall. He pitched on Mr. Perceval the Prime Minister, or Lord Granville Leveson,<sup>1</sup> who was Ambassador in Russia at the time certain claims in indemnification of losses sustained by him at Archangel had been presented without effect to the Russian and English Governments, without any positive personal enmity to either of those individuals. He determined, however, to sacrifice the first of the proclaimed a lawful prize, unless she had already touched at some British harbour.

The effect of this was to entirely put an end to the carrying trade of the world; for one side confiscated ships which had come from English ports, and the other those which had not. The Americans withdrew their ships entirely from European waters, and passed a Non-Intercourse Act forbidding commercial transactions with either of the combatants.]

<sup>1</sup> [Created Earl Granville in 1815. (1773—1846).]

two who should come within his reach. Accordingly, with this view, he took his stand on May 11, 1812, in the lobby of the House of Commons, of which both were members, with two small loaded pistols in his pocket; he sat patiently near the door till Mr. Perceval made his appearance, and then, approaching him without gesticulation or violence, shot him through the heart. His victim staggered and fell, exclaiming, "I am murdered," or, "The villain has murdered me," or words to that effect, and never spoke more.

The whole scene and many of the circumstances recalled the assassination of the Duke of Buckingham by Felton, and in nothing did it resemble it more than in the cool composure of the assassin, who, I think, resumed his seat, but certainly made no effort to escape. On making inquiry after "the villain," when the agitation had subsided, he surrendered himself without a struggle. On the spot, on the first examination, and on the trial, he avowed the deed; and though he called himself an unfortunate man, he seemed neither to repent nor to feel much anxiety to vindicate his motives or to avoid the consequences of his crime.

I was talking to Lord Spencer in the House of Lords, when we heard either the report of pistols or the scream of horror which the perpetration of the crime had excited. I recollect exclaiming, "What is that?" and being told, after a short interval, that it was a madman who thought himself the Duke of Norfolk and frequently molested the Courts of Justice with his pretensions. It was not long, however, before a figure, pale and breathless, rushed into the House, and, leaning on the bar, repeated twice or thrice, "He is murdered; I saw him dead." "Who?" "Where are we to go to assist?" was

reiterated from many present; and some minutes, I think, elapsed before we actually learnt that it was Mr. Perceval who was killed. The consternation was great; the appearance of most present ghastly. I remember I wondered to myself whether my face was as much altered as those of the persons around me—a thought which proves (as what indeed does not?) the accuracy and truth of the observation of Shakespeare on our feelings.

Look I so pale, Lord Dorset, as the rest?

is an exclamation of one of his characters, on hearing in a large company of the violent death of the Duke of Clarence.<sup>1</sup>

The peers were coming in very fast, and I think we took some precautions to inform Lord Arden<sup>2</sup> of the event. All expressed horror; some few seemed to ponder on the changes likely to ensue; and more were manifestly apprehensive that the crime was connected with extensive designs, and the result of conspiracies which the state of the country rendered by no means improbable. The House of Commons had adjourned. The House of Lords has been censured and ridiculed for not doing so too; perhaps it was the best course. Yet to quit the spot on the report of a crime committed within the precincts of Parliament, without inquiry into the fact or comment upon it, seemed to many peers, and among them, I own, to me, an unnatural and undignified and almost a dastardly proceeding. We had, therefore, the fact deposed to at the bar; but when we had resolved to ground some proceeding thereupon, it must be

<sup>1</sup> [*King Richard II.*, Act II., Scene i.]

<sup>2</sup> [Charles George, Lord Arden (1756—1840), Mr. Perceval's eldest brother.]



acknowledged that we found some difficulty in devising any in form and substance unobjectionable. We passed an address unanimously to the Prince Regent, praying him little more than to enforce the laws. Lord Radnor wrote and Lord Chancellor moved it. Most of the peers present accompanied it to Carlton House. It is to be observed that the Lords were not aware of the character and condition of the assassin. They who blame our proceeding should reflect what would have been their own impression, and what the inferences in the public, had the murder turned out to be a part of any extensive design, and the two Houses, on the perpetration of it, had dispersed themselves, without daring to express their sense of the outrage or a determination to investigate the causes of it.

The Old Bailey Sessions were sitting, and the assassin was brought to immediate trial. He applied for delay to bring witnesses from a distance in proof of his insanity. He was denied that indulgence, condemned on the 15th, and executed on May 18, within one week of the perpetration of the murder. Such hurry was by many thought harsh and illegal, and by more injudicious and improper. Insanity, or at least insanity of a certain sort, by the law of England exempts the accused from a verdict of guilty. The wisdom of such mercy may reasonably be questioned; but whatever the law wisely or unwisely admits to be a vindication of the act, the accused should be allowed full opportunity of proving in his defence. It was, therefore, shrewdly suspected that there was more dread of a Prime Minister's murderer escaping than reverence for the forms of law in the refusal to postpone the trial. Whether from this consideration, from the distress of the times, from the acrimonious spirit

of Mr. Perceval's politics, or from that composed courage in the sufferer, which in spite of reason seldom fails to conciliate favour even for a criminal, certain it is, that among the crowds who thronged to the execution of Bellingham more commiseration was shown for the culprit than for his victim. Women were struck with his fine and manly person. Strange tales of his amorous complexion, whispered abroad, did not weaken that favourable impression. They were currently repeated at this day,<sup>1</sup> and I am sorry to acknowledge that at the distance of some years the name of Bellingham was far from unpopular in London.

In truth, the death of Mr. Perceval was hailed as a deliverance in various parts of the country. Some classes, whose habits should have taught them to reject any consolation drawn from the commission of a horrible crime and should also have bespoken more sympathy for so religious a man, could hardly conceal their delight at the prospect of the removal of those worldly evils under which they were labouring. One of the leading manufacturers of Birmingham, a strict Dissenter, who had come up to London with petitions against the Orders in Council, lamented to me, with a demure countenance and a subdued voice, the wickedness of the times on which he had been cast, where, he said, as the coaches arrived in various parts of the kingdom, the intelligence of the murder of a fellow creature had been received with more exultation

<sup>1</sup> I wrote this in 1820 or 1821. Since that period the impression of which I speak, if not altered, has been worn away and is much forgotten. The change in men and in the condition of the country, and the unreasonable and extravagant excitement produced by recent crimes and their punishments, have, I believe, obliterated in the mind of the common people the recollection of their feelings about Bellingham.  
—V.H.

than horror, and even in some places greeted with savage shouts of un-Christian joy. "It is indeed disgusting; and yet," added he, with an arch, puritanical smile, "it proves the sad condition of the poor manufacturers, and it cannot be denied that, in the present critical state of the question on the Orders in Council, the finger of a benevolent Providence is visible in this horrible event."

The result, however, so confidently anticipated, would hardly have ensued had the vigilance and perseverance of Mr. Brougham been relaxed. He braved the censure of enemies and shocked the more timid and more gentle of his friends, by resolutely insisting, without regard to the feelings of individuals or the convenience of the Government, on the immediate relinquishment of the Orders in Council, before Mr. Perceval was cold in his grave or the arrangements for a new Ministry in any forwardness at Court. To that wise and firm, but at the same time somewhat odious conduct, the country is indebted for a revision of a system, unjust to other nations and ruinous to itself. Mr. Perceval had too much spirit to be intimidated, and too much bigotry to be convinced, by the clamour or the sufferings of the people. Had he lived, he would, no doubt, have persisted, at the peril of his own power, as well as of the prosperity of the kingdom, in the injudicious and violent measures he had from zeal and ignorance so hastily adopted.<sup>1</sup>

He was a man of principle, integrity, and courage; and though a bitter persecutor of such political and religious principles as he without much painful inquiry or dispassionate reflection disapproved, he was in-

<sup>1</sup> [Mr. Perceval had, in April, sanctioned the appointment of Committees of both Houses to examine the flood of petitions which were pouring in.]



dulgent to his friends and liberal of his money. In business he was diligent, attentive, and distinct. It is true that even the eminent post he reached never enabled him to soar to the higher regions of eloquence; but in debate he was acute, judicious, and, above all, intrepid and ready. "He is not," said Mr. Grattan, "a ship-of-the-line, but he carries many guns, is tight built, and is out in all weathers." He had, indeed, the length, but was said not to have the learning, belonging to his profession. Prolixity was his great fault as a speaker; propensity to retaliation and attack his chief error as a Minister in Parliament. His virtues and his vices rendered him the most mischievous and dangerous man who had guided our councils for a century. Nothing but a dread that my words may be distorted into an attempt to palliate an atrocious crime makes me hesitate in pronouncing his death (as in my conscience I think it) a very fortunate event for the glory, happiness, and independence of my country. More changes were expected from it than actually took place.

In returning from the House of Lords I met Lord Grey, and took that early opportunity of expressing to him my sense of the importance of coming to an understanding with Lord Moira, Lord Wellesley, and Mr. Canning, before the Prince Regent had sent either to them or to us, and while we could negotiate a junction on the footing of perfect equality without the advantage on either side which an ostensible preference given by the Court would confer. He was by no means averse to a junction with any or all of them on honourable principles. He had no objection to speak to Lord Moira; but he doubted whether that was a proper moment for any negotiation with

Mr. Canning, to whom I saw he retained much repugnance. He was yet more decidedly averse to making the first overture to him or to Lord Wellesley, from a notion of dignity to which I deferred, but which appeared to me to be mistaken and misplaced. He enjoined me to mention my notions to no one, and I obeyed him. Is it judging by the event, to attribute our subsequent exclusion from office to the want of such early understanding with the other public men then unemployed? Had we caught up and harnessed beforehand all the Ministers at grass, the Prince Regent could hardly have ventured in any conveyance but such as we had to offer him. I am, indeed, satisfied that his chief object throughout was to prevent the admission of the Whigs to office. But if on applying to Lord Wellesley or Lord Moira, he had found those two noblemen in actual concert with the Whigs and bound in honour and inclined from interest and principle to act with them, he could scarcely have framed a proposal which would not have led either to a joint Administration, or to a union of many separate powers in an Opposition too formidable for the rump of Mr. Perceval's Cabinet to encounter.

The Prince Regent began by directing Lord Liverpool to communicate with Lord Wellesley and Mr. Canning on the means of strengthening the existing Administration, by associating to it persons who agreed most nearly and generally in the principles on which it had been conducted; but though he disclaimed all principles of exclusion, he authorised no proposal to persons connected with Opposition. This endeavour failed.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Canning, who waived all personal objections to Lord Castlereagh as Lord

<sup>1</sup> [The papers and minutes relating to these negotiations are given in the *Annual Register* for 1812, State Papers, p. 346, etc.]

Castlereagh had also done to him, thought, however, that his personal and public character would incur a loss and the Government derive no strength, from his accession to a Ministry which resisted all consideration of the Catholic question after he had declared himself anxious to press that measure on Parliament and the public.

Lord Wellesley yet more pointedly declined any association with the Ministry, while their opinions on the laws affecting Roman Catholics remained unchanged. He apprehended too great a difference of sentiment on the conduct and management of the Peninsular war subsisted between him and Mr. Perceval's colleagues, to render any renewal of connection with them in office advantageous to the public or acceptable to himself. He suggested at the end of his letter the propriety, necessity, and practicability of the admission of some of the Whigs into office; manifestly implying that the want of authority on that head was one of his objections to the commission of Lord Liverpool from the Prince Regent.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Wellesley was on this, and throughout the correspondence that ensued, more conciliatory to the Whigs than Mr. Canning. He was evidently more disposed to act with a party with whom he had never been connected, than with those from whom he had recently separated with some avowed, and more concealed, asperity and contempt. These feelings of animosity were considerably inflamed by the polemical tone he assumed in his correspondence, and yet more by the indecent haste with which he published his letters and answers. Lord Liverpool assured me that he read the letter to him of May 21, printed in the newspaper called the *Times*, before he had received,

<sup>1</sup> [This letter was dated May 18.]



or at least before he had broken the seal of, the original. The scheme for strengthening the old Ministry being thus defeated, the opinion that it could not maintain itself grew more general.

Mr. Stuart Wortley,<sup>1</sup> a friend of Mr. Canning, though related to Lady Liverpool, moved the House of Commons on May 21 to address the Regent to, "form an efficient Administration." Such motions, in substance and intention interfering in the choice of Ministers by the executive Government and always offensive to a Court, have been often negatived, when made by Whigs, as unconstitutional encroachments on the prerogative. Small middle parties and detached place-hunters, being factions who derive great advantage from an unlimited and uncontrolled choice of servants in the Crown, are almost invariably foremost in resisting them. On this occasion, however, the address to that purpose was moved by a Tory country gentleman, and was supported by Mr. Canning. The Whigs concurred with it, and it was carried by a majority of four. Ministers were compelled to tender their resignation, and the Prince Regent constrained to make some demonstration of an effort to supply their place.

If I were to attempt to thread the labyrinth of his intrigues and devices, my readers would be perplexed with the intricacy and weary of the length of the narrative. Some prominent facts are quite sufficient to detect the nature of the design, which was, to elude the wishes of the House of Commons, to preserve as nearly as possible the Administration then in power, to divide or to degrade any public men who had contributed to discomfit Mr. Perceval's

<sup>1</sup> [James Archibald Stuart-Wortley-Mackenzie (1776—1845), created Baron Wharncliffe in 1826.]

remaining colleagues, and to exclude all the Whigs, but more especially Lord Grey, from all share of power. To compass these ends, his first artifice was to authorise Lord Wellesley *to ascertain the views and dispositions of all parties with regard to certain principles, previously to the formation of any plans of Administration, and then to lay before him a plan for an Administration adapted to the crisis of affairs, but not directly to form any Ministry.*<sup>1</sup>

The principles laid down by Lord Wellesley were,<sup>2</sup> first, that the Roman Catholic disabilities should be immediately considered with a view to a conciliatory adjustment; secondly, that the Peninsular war should be prosecuted with adequate vigour. He submitted them himself to Lord Grey; and Mr. Canning offered them at his suggestion to Lord Liverpool, because his recent discussions with that Minister had produced so much ill blood that the intervention of a third person was deemed by Lord Wellesley to be more judicious and acceptable. But Lord Liverpool, in his own name and that of all his colleagues except Lord Melville, drily declined the proposal of becoming members of any Administration formed by Lord Wellesley, and thought, after all that had passed with his Lordship, that it was unnecessary to enter into any discussion of the principles he had submitted

<sup>1</sup> [Mr. Creevey's account of these negotiations in a letter, dated May 25, is worthy of comparison with the text: "First then when Prinney sent for Wellesley, the latter began by mentioning some of the Opposition as persons to be consulted with; to which the former replied: 'Don't mention any names to me *now*, my Lord, but make an Administration for me!' To which the other says: 'In a business of such nicety I trust your Royal Highness will not press me for time.' 'Take your own time,' says Prinney, 'tho' there is not a shilling left in the Exchequer!'" (*The Creevey Papers.*)]

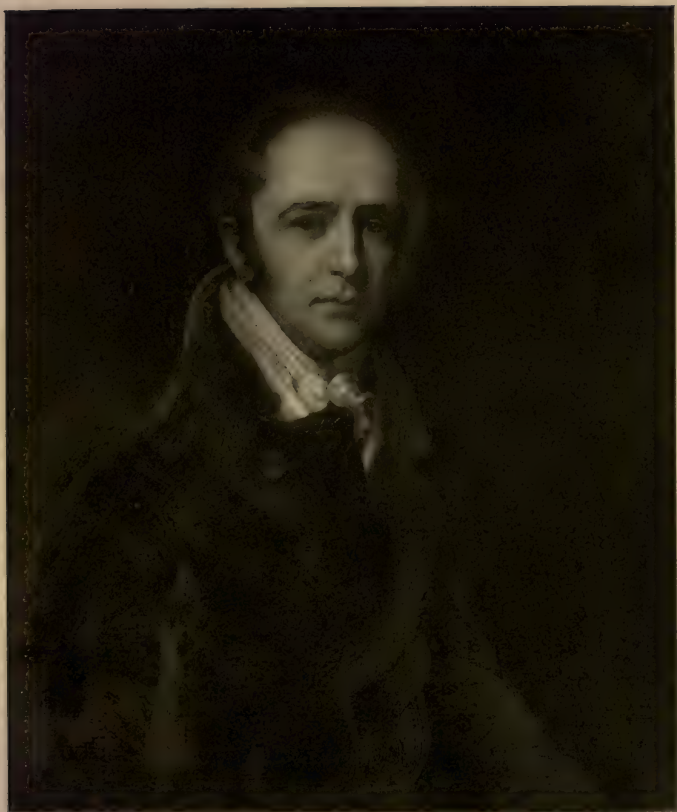
<sup>2</sup> [In a communication made to Lords Grey and Grenville at Lord Grey's house on May 23.]

to them. Lord Melville answered in a separate memorandum. He was not less peremptory in his personal objections to Lord Wellesley, but to the principles he had suggested he felt none.

The answer of Lord Grey and Lord Grenville, adopted after due deliberation with their friends, Lords Lansdowne and Lauderdale, Messrs. Ponsonby, Tierney, and myself, was in substance as follows: an assurance of a disposition to give effect to the late vote of the House of Commons by the abandonment of every personal object; an unqualified promise of supporting any proposal made by any Ministers for the conciliatory adjustment of the Roman Catholic claims, with a warm compliment to Lord Wellesley for his powerful exertions in that cause; and a cautious postponement of all opinion on the more or less vigorous prosecution of the Peninsular war, as a question not of principle but of policy, to be regulated by temporary and fluctuating circumstances on which out of office it was impossible for them to pronounce. To this, however, was added an expression of doubt how far any increase of expenditure was practicable.

This paper, justly denominated by Mr. Ponsonby a "safe" answer, and as justly considered by Lord Wellesley as a favourable and conciliatory one, was delivered to the Prince Regent on May 24. On receiving it, and *before he had read it*, he exclaimed, "*What! a refusal?*" After reading it, and on being told by Lord Wellesley that it was satisfactory in that stage of the business, he gave him no authority to proceed, but professed to take time to consider of it. He employed that time in devising arguments to distort the answer into a refusal, in calumniating Lord Grey, in attempts to detach Mr. Canning from Lord Wellesley or to prevail on both to join the old





Portrait of the Earl Grey

Emery Walker 1850

Charles, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Grey



Ministry, and in alarming Lord Liverpool and the Duke of York with the prospect of his rage at the Whigs and his vexation at his embarrassments terminating in madness. During this period of anger and intrigue, in which he frequently saw Mr. Sheridan, he urged the old Ministry to stand their ground and brave the House of Commons; and he pressed Lord Moira to form an Administration, without apprising Lord Wellesley—whose commission, however, he maintained, was only suspended and not concluded. Lord Moira prudently declined; but when the circumstance reached Lord Wellesley it confirmed the suspicions he had begun to harbour of the Regent's insincerity, and furnished him with fresh motives for exacting, when subsequently employed by His Royal Highness, some more specific power and instructions than he had hitherto obtained. Displeased at discovering that the old Ministers, on the plea of retaining *pro tempore* their offices, had long and frequent audiences of the Prince Regent, he and Lord Moira offered to hold the seals of office till some Administration should be formed. That offer was not accepted.

In the meanwhile Lord Moira extracted from Lord Grey an explanation, or rather an accurate statement, of what he had said in the House of Lords on the disappointment of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, with the friendly view of satisfying the Prince that no personal affront to him had been offered or intended on that occasion.

The firmness of Lord Wellesley, the intervention of Lord Moira, and the opinion of others, especially the Duke of York and Lord Egremont<sup>1</sup> (the

<sup>1</sup> [George, third Earl of Egremont (1751—1837). He took little part in politics, but is justly remembered for the encouragement he gave to every form of art.]



latter of whom avowed much political dislike to the two Lords, yet concurred in representing the services of both as essentially necessary to the country), at length prevailed on His Royal Highness with a bad grace to authorise Lord Wellesley to enter on a negotiation not only with Lord Grenville, but with Lord Grey, to whom he had chiefly taken an exception. In yielding, however, to this advice, he contrived to clog his offer with conditions, which he had the sagacity to foresee that the prudence or the high spirit of those with whom he negotiated would instantly reject. He did not direct Lord Wellesley to discuss measures and arrangements with the two Lords, but he directed him to annex as a condition and to stipulate that Lord Moira, Lord Erskine, and Mr. Canning should be members of the Cabinet ;<sup>1</sup> and that to a Ministry so constituted they should recommend a certain number of members limited by previous arrangement or order from His Royal Highness.

Lord Wellesley, in delivering this proposal, intimated that Lord Melville should also be invited to a seat in the new Cabinet ; that the Great Seal should be offered to Sir William Grant ;<sup>2</sup> and that the Prince Regent would be gratified at Lord Eldon, though deprived of the Seal, being still retained in the Cabinet. To this proposal a refusal was drawn up by Lord Grenville and Lord Grey, and cordially approved

<sup>1</sup> I think the Prince Regent wished to stipulate that Lord Wellesley should be First Lord of the Treasury, but Lord Wellesley declared to the two Lords in the first communication, and had probably stated to His Royal Highness beforehand, that he wished to decline that office and to leave the new Ministry, if formed, to cast the parts among themselves.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [Sir William Grant (1752—1832), Master of the Rolls from 1801 to 1817.]

of by all their leading friends in both Houses of Parliament. The grounds of their objections were strongly but respectfully stated to be a conviction that the plan was formed on a principle of disunion, that the proceeding was in itself novel and inconvenient, and the tendency of it would be to establish in the Cabinet itself a system of counteraction inconsistent with the prosecution of any uniform or beneficial course of policy.

On June 3 Lord Wellesley reported the failure of his negotiations, and recommended that some further explanations should be given; but he was informed by the Prince Regent that his powers had now ceased, and his commission was withdrawn. Lord Wellesley lost no time in informing the public, through the House of Lords, that his commission had been revoked; and in the course of his speech lamented that, "personal animosities, dreadful personal animosities," had stood in the way of any advantageous and amicable arrangement. This strong phrase was applied by the public to the Prince Regent's prejudices against Lord Grey; but when both Lord Moira and Lord Grenville acquitted Lord Wellesley of having meant any imputation on the Prince, and Lord Boringdon ascribed it, in Lord Wellesley's absence, very awkwardly to inadvertence, the spirited little Marquis returned to the House, and, not satisfied with disclaiming the false meaning annexed in his words, declared explicitly that they studiously intended to stigmatise, and did, in truth, accurately describe, the feelings and conduct of the old Ministers towards him. A warm altercation ensued, in which Lord Wellesley expressed his scorn of his late colleagues in language which, if they had not then the wit to repel or confute, they afterwards showed

they had the memory to retain and the disposition not easily to forgive.<sup>1</sup> Lord Moira, satisfied that all the above negotiations had failed from a misunderstanding, was still desirous to rectify it. With that view he sought opportunities of conversing, and wrote one or two notes to Lords Grey and Grenville, who civilly but distinctly declined pursuing the subject by unauthorised discussions. He was then furnished with full powers, and had an interview with the two Lords at his house in St. James's Place on June 6, 1812.

To that interview it must be acknowledged that the two Lords went but ill prepared to bring matters to an amicable issue, and with some inclination, from a prospect of fresh and reviving embarrassments, to seize any plausible pretence for declining the proffered boon. Even had they been otherwise able to form an Administration, they had, from delicacy or from indolence, neglected to come to any agreement between themselves on some of the most important points connected with such arrangements. The Regent did not conceal his personal dislike to Lord Grey. To have selected him for the Treasury—an office which he never held, and which would have brought him more than any other into personal intercourse with the Regent—would certainly have provoked the indignation of the Court, and might, with some plausibility, be construed into an insult on the feelings of the Prince Regent. On the other hand, Lord Grenville had no disposition to surrender his auditorship, and our Parliamentary friends had still less to approve

<sup>1</sup> This passage was written in the autumn of 1821. Within three months the remark was in some senses practically refuted, for Lord Wellesley was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, but whether at the suggestion of Lord Liverpool's Ministry or with its reluctant and extorted consent, I cannot determine. March, 1822.—V.H.



of his retaining it with the Treasury.<sup>1</sup> No third plan had been devised. Lord Moira had not, like Lord Wellesley, avowed a determination not to accept the Treasury. There were, indeed, circumstances, arising from the embarrassed state of his private affairs and his too compliant temper, which would have disqualified him for that office; but they were in their nature not very easy to be urged to him, and no plan not liable to inconvenience could be suggested in lieu of one, which, but for the objections alluded to, so obviously presented itself.

These difficulties, together with Lord Grey's distrust of the Regent and Lord Grenville's concealed, but not unreasonable, discontent with our parliamentary friends, indisposed both those Lords to any amicable termination of the negotiation. When, therefore, at the outset, Lord Moira refused to acquiesce in any removal of the great officers of the Household, or even to recognise the propriety of vesting any power of removing them in the Cabinet, they peremptorily declined accepting office with any such restriction; though Lord Moira was at great pains to assure them that the stipulation was entirely his own, and did not come from the Prince Regent.

The two Lords, no doubt, thought such a condition a less indelicate and more plausible ground of rupture, than others which they foresaw must arise in discussing the detail of arrangements. Unquestionably, as a ground of rejection, it had some advantages; it covered weaknesses in their own party, it screened them from the imputation of personal jealousies of those with whom they were to act; but, on the other hand, it did not expose the insincerity of the Court so manifestly as further progress in the negotiation might

<sup>1</sup> [See *ante*, p. 87.]

have done, and, like all pretexts contrived to keep out of sight the real motives of action, it rendered their conduct somewhat unintelligible to the public. They had, indeed, the satisfaction to find it approved by their House of Commons friends, with the exception of Mr. Whitbread, and by all their chief supporters in the Lords without one dissentient voice. Lord Darlington,<sup>1</sup> who had originally joined the Whigs through the influence of Carlton House, declared that had they acted otherwise they would have lost his support. Even Lord Erskine, who had endeavoured to render them more compliant, joined our meeting of June 7 at Lord Grenville's, with an assurance that he would contribute to form no middle or neutral Administration, but "die in the political connection in which he had hitherto lived." To this gallant determination, the conduct of Lord Moira, which afterwards reached my ears, may possibly have contributed. He had a few hours before informed Lord Erskine that in the Administration he was then projecting he intended to offer him the Presidentship, and not the Seals, which he destined to Sir William Grant. With an equal want of dexterity he had, about the same time, called on Lord Eldon to apprise him, as an old private friend, that he had no intention of offering him anything in his new Administration.

When Lord Wellesley had made some progress in his negotiations with the Whig Lords, and when he thought his project, though in its actual shape declined, might be so modified as to lead to an accommodation, the Prince Regent first suspended and then cancelled his powers. When Lord Moira had entirely failed in his negotiation and peremptorily rejected the

<sup>1</sup> [William Harry, third Earl of Darlington (1766—1842). He was created Duke of Cleveland in 1833.]

principles on which alone the two Whig Lords would enter upon treaty, His Royal Highness continued his powers, and left him at liberty to form a Ministry of which he was quite satisfied the two obnoxious Lords would not be a part. Lord Moira was, indeed, sanguine. He hoped to form a Ministry, even though the Whigs refused to co-operate with him, without having recourse to the late Ministers, whom he continued to term "those fellows." His first step was to offer Mr. Canning a seat in the Cabinet and a share in the arrangements for filling it. Mr. Canning, with certain conditions and reserves, accepted the offer. Lord Moira then commissioned Mr. Canning to persuade Lord Liverpool (a prominent Member of the late Cabinet, and consequently one of the "fellows" described by Lord Moira) to accede to his Ministry, which was nevertheless to be formed on a principle favourable to Catholic Emancipation.

This proposal Lord Liverpool naturally declined. He added that he had neither by word nor deed counteracted the object of the veto of [the] House of Commons for a new Ministry; and he somewhat carefully qualified his opinion on the Catholic question by observing that, although he should always vote against the measure, he was not precluded from supporting or even acting with a Ministry favourable to some further concessions to the Roman Catholics provided he, in other respects, concurred in their general politics. Lord Moira was not discouraged by Lord Liverpool's refusal. He consulted Mr. Sheridan, but he offered him no seat in the Cabinet; he sent up express for Mr. Whitbread, entertained some strange hopes of that gentleman taking office, and gave him in return yet stranger, of Government espousing the cause of Parliamentary reform.



In the meanwhile he had authorised Mr. Canning to find four Cabinet Ministers, including himself. He spoke of the Duke of Norfolk and Lords Hardwicke, Erskine, and Egremont as four others on whom he (Lord Moira) could rely for active co-operation.<sup>1</sup> Few hours elapsed before Mr. Canning learnt that three of the above-mentioned Lords had declined every offer; and that Lord Egremont had never been consulted by Lord Moira, but only quoted by the Prince Regent as a man whose reluctance to take office he could, in case of great emergency, overrule. After sundry other meetings, which seemed devised for no practical purpose whatever, Lord Moira presented at Carlton House the meagre list of names suggested rather than procured by Mr. Canning.<sup>2</sup> The Prince Regent, glancing his eye carelessly over them, exclaimed: "You see, my dear Moira, they are chiefly Pittites; so the best way is to make up with the present men, and you may settle it all with Eldon and Liverpool, *who are waiting in the adjoining room.*" Lord Moira took his leave. The matter was as easily settled without him by the statesmen in waiting, and in ten minutes Lord Liverpool kissed hands as First Lord of the Treasury.

It was understood, on this revival of the old Ministry, that Government, as such, was to take no part on the Catholic question: that a subject, which had agitated the public for years, was to be considered by those who directed the councils of the nation as

<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Norfolk, on the first offer, gladly accepted it, and returning to his house said to Mr. Stephenson, who lived with him, with some exaltation, "I am Lord Privy Seal." He afterwards found he had no Whig, and scarcely any other, colleague; and he was off, relating on his return home the very next day to the same gentleman, with some pleasantry, "I am now not Lord Privy Seal."—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [On June 8.]

matter of indifference, on which they were not to concert any line of conduct whatever. Persons in office were to give their votes on that question, without paying or exacting any deference or compliance from their colleagues or subordinate officers. The only accession to the Ministry consisted of Lord Sidmouth and some few of his friends.<sup>1</sup>

Thus an address moved by a partisan of Mr. Canning,<sup>2</sup> and carried by the assistance of the Whigs, for the purpose of forcing either or both into the Cabinet, terminated by riveting those against whom it was directed more securely than ever in power, and procuring a share of it to the only faction in Parliament which had concurred in resisting the motion. Lord Liverpool assured me that he had been on the point of setting off on a tour on the Wye, and that from the period of the vote in [the] Commons to the failure of Lord Moira's negotiations with Lord Grey, he had never directly nor indirectly obstructed the formation of a new, or endeavoured to preserve, the old Administration. I gave and give full credit to his assertion, and, with the exception of Lord Eldon, I believe the same might be said of most of his colleagues. Strong disinclination to office in the two Whig Lords; perhaps some little tincture of pride, mingled with manners unconciliatory to strangers; the unsurmountable barrier of opinion on the Catholic question between many of the parties concerned; the secret contrivances of Sheridan to make his power felt; the

<sup>1</sup> [The principal members of the new Government were as follows: Earl of Liverpool, First Lord of the Treasury; Viscount Castlereagh, Foreign Secretary; Lord Melville, First Lord of the Admiralty; Earl Bathurst, Secretary for War and Colonies; Lord Sidmouth, Secretary for Home Department; Lord Eldon, Lord Chancellor; Lord Harrowby, Lord President of the Council.]

<sup>2</sup> [Mr. Stuart Wortley's motion on May 21 for an efficient Administration. See *ante*, p. 136.]

generous but somewhat unintelligible endeavour of Lord Moira to screen the Regent from all odium ; and above all the private determination of the latter, steadily pursued through many byways and winding paths, to exclude the Whigs and Lord Grey in particular—were the real causes which defeated the formation of a new Ministry.

The Regent, to mark his satisfaction with Lord Moira, threw the Collar of St. George round his neck and embraced him with tears ; which, it is whispered, His Royal Highness has the prerogative of shedding at pleasure. Lord Moira was soon afterwards named Governor-General of India.<sup>1</sup> Though the tool of others' duplicity, and, in some measure, the dupe of his own refinements in loyalty, his motives were friendly to the Whigs, honest to the country, kind to the Prince, and creditable to his own character on the score of generosity but not of sagacity.

I have been minute in relating the above transactions. The secret motives of the parties were not obvious to distant observers, and much misunderstood at the time. The statements made in the House of Lords never reached the public. Even if they had, little would have been learnt from them. On one occasion, Lord Grey having characterised Lord Moira's character as chivalrous, Moira understood the phrase as a reflection on his understanding. A debate ensued, which their respective, or rather common, friends were better pleased to leave without intelligible comment than to prolong at the hazard of a quarrel. The negotiations expose the hostility of the Prince Regent to the Whigs. They thereby furnish a clue to his previous proceedings and an explanation of his subsequent conduct. They dis-

<sup>1</sup> [In 1813.]



cover the relations in which parties stood to one another; and thereby exhibit a picture of the politics of the time, and portraits of those most prominent in them.

Writers have often represented such negotiations as little more or less than a barefaced scramble for places, a contest of ambition in some few, and of avarice in more. In those I have witnessed there has been generally among leading statesmen much less appetite for office, much less ambition and avarice, than more respectable passions. In that here related, not only Lord Grey and Lord Grenville, but Lord Wellesley, Mr. Canning, and even Lord Liverpool, seem throughout to have foregone the prospect of place and power for a creditable and sometimes an overstrained and fastidious regard to character and consistency. Every one of them might have obtained office by the sacrifice either of connections or opinions. Possibly they were reprehensible for some portion of pride, vanity, or resentment; but nobody with an appearance of reason could impute to any one of them, on this occasion, either an inordinate desire of power or a grovelling passion for place or emolument.

The adulation bestowed on living Princes is disgusting; the admiration for high station and rank, common to most, and especially to professional men, is adverse to the cause of truth and often ridiculous. The habit of ascribing great designs and elevated motives to all the actions of public characters, so prevalent in courtly writers, is not only false and foolish but mischievous. On the other hand, the passion in which vulgar minds indulge of levelling all public characters to their own standard, and branding indiscriminately the leaders and followers

of all parties with the meanest selfishness, is equally false, nearly as foolish, and much more mischievous. Far from showing sagacity, it betrays an ignorance of mankind as well as malignity of disposition. Instead of deterring men from corruption by the exposure of vice, it extinguishes one of the strongest incentives to virtue, posthumous fame; and it reconciles the world to the practice of iniquity by representing it to be universal and unavoidable.

The re-establishment of the old Ministry under Lord Liverpool was a new epoch. I defer the relation of the remaining events of the year and the Session of 1812 to another chapter.

## INTRODUCTION TO BOOK THE THIRD

**I**T seemed unlikely that Lord Liverpool's Administration, composed almost entirely of men of second-rate ability and slender talent, would have a long existence when pitted against the full strength of the Whig Party. The Cabinet was divided on more than one of the leading questions of the day, and though they could now rely with certainty on the steady support of the Prince Regent, it seemed doubtful whether they would long remain in power.

Lord Holland states that the Government obtained some popularity from the successes of the British armies in the Peninsula; and certainly Wellington's victories were a forcible argument against the petitions and motions in Parliament urging the re-establishment of peace. That General decisively defeated Marmont in July, 1812, at Salamanca, and advanced to Madrid. Though the result of this step politically was most opportune, he was unable to maintain his position in the Spanish capital, and was forced to retire to Portugal before the advance of the French armies. Appointed Commander-in-Chief during the winter he took the field with renewed vigour in 1813. The French, dismayed at the news of their Emperor's



disastrous retreat from Moscow, were concentrated early in the spring, and commenced their retreat behind the Ebro. Wellington hurried in pursuit, defeated Joseph in a pitched battle at Vittoria, and continued his advance with such success that he entered France at the head of the Allied armies early in October.

Napoleon's preparations for the campaign which he determined should finally bring the whole Continent under his sway were on a scale up to that time unknown in the history of the world. It will be remembered that Austria and Prussia were bound by treaty to assist him, should he require their aid. He forced them to fulfil their contract, and exacted both men and money to assist him in the furtherance of his schemes. The French armies crossed the Russian frontiers in June, 1812. Alexander, who had hurriedly made peace with the Porte, could collect but half the number of troops required to oppose the invader on even terms. Chance rather than any settled plan of action governed the fortunes of the Russian forces, which retreated before the advance of Napoleon. So far everything was successful; but the organisation of the French transport had been found wanting early in the campaign, and after the obstinately contested battle of Borodino and the occupation of Moscow, Napoleon realised that it would be an impossibility to maintain his troops in winter near that town. Orders for retreat were given; hunger and

cold did their worst; every step was closely dogged by the Russian armies; and of the 480,000 men who entered Russia, little more than 20,000 returned.

Intelligence of the French disasters was sent by the Russians to General von York, who commanded the Prussian troops under French orders at Riga. After some hesitation, divining the inclinations of the nation, he threw in his lot with the Russians, though King Frederick William had up to that time given no sign of any rupture with Napoleon. He was encouraged, however, by Alexander's successful pursuit of the French, and declared war against France in March, 1813. Napoleon, who had left the disordered remnant of his army early in December, made superhuman efforts in France to raise fresh troops for service in Germany. His endeavours were crowned with success; but the young levy, unused to the exigencies of warfare, were in no way to be compared to the veterans whose lives he had ruthlessly sacrificed in the previous campaign. The opening phases of the conflict were favourable to the French, and had Napoleon seized his opportunity after the battle of Bautzen, he could have obtained peace on sufficiently advantageous terms. But his ever-increasing ambition proved his ruin, and a conviction that the Austrian Court would remain faithful to him blinded him to the true facts of the case. That nation was indeed wavering, and Metternich, the guiding star of its foreign policy, had already perceived that Napoleon was insatiable

in his demands, and that a fresh appeal to arms was inevitable. Austria joined the Allies early in August, and a series of battles took place, culminating in the defeat of Napoleon at Leipsic and his retirement to France. After the decisive result of this campaign, conditions of peace were again offered by the Allies, but no definite answer was received, and the offer was withdrawn early in December.

The invasion of France commenced early in January, 1814, before Napoleon, who had lost the services of a numerous body of men left in Germany to garrison the fortresses, had gained time to collect fresh troops. It is probable that he might still have retained the throne of France, had he frankly accepted the terms offered at Chatillon in February; but Caulaincourt, the French plenipotentiary, was afraid of signing a treaty which he knew would be disavowed in the event of a French success, and the opportunity was lost for ever.

The Congress of Chatillon broke up without arriving at any decided agreement as to the future settlement of France. The Allies resolved to advance to Paris, and they entered that city on March 31. Napoleon made several skilful attempts to bar their progress; but the disgust of the French nation at the continuance of war, the treachery of his generals, and the hopeless numerical inferiority of his forces, made any permanent success an impossibility. A provisional Government was proclaimed in Paris under Talleyrand, Napoleon was dethroned and sent to Elba, and the



Bourbons were recalled to the throne in the person of Louis XVIII.

Wellington, in the south, paused for some months after reaching the frontiers of France in October, 1813, till the senseless intrigues of King Ferdinand, whom Napoleon had allowed to return to Spain, made the British commander's position somewhat insecure. He resumed operations early in February. Soult was unable to withstand his advance, and the continued British successes closed with the hard-earned battle of Toulouse—a useless sacrifice of 8,000 lives, for Napoleon had abdicated six days before. Wellington, who had accepted the post of British Ambassador in Paris, reached that city early in May, in time to be present at the conclusion of the definitive treaty.

By this treaty, briefly, France retained what was practically her frontier in 1792, without the exaction of any indemnity; Switzerland became a republic; Holland, Spain, Westphalia, Tuscany, and Piedmont were restored to their respective sovereigns; while other outstanding questions of importance were deferred for discussion at a Congress to be held at Vienna within two months.

On the completion of their task, the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia proceeded to England to pay a visit of congratulation to the Prince Regent; but the Emperor of Austria was obliged to return to his own dominions. London was *en fête*, and great crowds received the monarchs enthusiastically, and everywhere accompanied their progress during their

stay in the country. It was about this time that rumours were heard of the approaching marriage of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, then in her seventeenth year, to the Prince of Orange, eldest son of the newly made King of Holland. The probability of the arrangement was universally believed ; but the negotiations were broken off, and she married within two years Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg.

War broke out between England and the United States, in the summer of 1812, over the question of the British Orders in Council. The struggle lasted with varying success for two years and a half. By sea the Americans more than held their own ; but their attempted invasions of Canada met with no success. Peace was concluded by the Treaty of Ghent early in 1815, much to the delight of both countries.

## BOOK THE THIRD

1812—1815

N.B.—Written in 1821, 1822, and subsequent years. Transcribed in 1825.

LORD LIVERPOOL'S new Administration, huddled up from the cast rags and tatters of the old, and consisting of pieces neither costly in themselves nor well assorted to one another, seemed of no very lasting texture or composition. On the great question of domestic policy—commonly called Catholic Emancipation, they could only avoid disunion and dismemberment by renouncing all opinion and action as a Government. The Prime Minister in the Lords, as well as a majority in the Cabinet, was hostile to the measure; yet the Leader in the Commons, Lord Castlereagh, a man of judgment, temper, and courage, but destitute of all eloquence, wit, taste, or knowledge, and at that period alike unpopular in England and Ireland, had avowed that one great purpose of his public life was to carry it.

Of the parliamentary statesmen not actually in the ranks of their opponents, none had any strong predilections and many had personal enmities to the Ministers. Mr. Wilberforce<sup>1</sup> and the party called "Saints" could not view with very great complacency an Administration formed almost exclusively of the

<sup>1</sup> [William Wilberforce (1759—1833), the champion of the Bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, which was passed in 1807.]



ancient and inveterate enemies of their favourite measure "the Abolition." If Mr. Canning was somewhat less disposed than he had been to ridicule the incapacity of Lord Liverpool, his resentment to Lord Castlereagh for his Ministerial opposition and personal hostility in 1809 had scarcely abated. Lord Wellesley did not conceal his private aversion and public scorn of his late colleagues; and even the Prince Regent himself, though united cordially with them in hatred of the Whigs, had no strong ties of personal attachment or political gratitude to cement his connection with them. A war with America was impending, and the Orders in Council could not be maintained without ruin to the country, and, on the other hand, could hardly be abandoned without disgusting the only warm supporters the Ministry had, *viz.*, the adherents of Mr. Perceval. They relinquished them, however, and to all appearance at the instance or from a dread of Mr. Brougham.<sup>1</sup>

Such an acknowledgment of weakness seemed an inauspicious commencement of an Administration. From all these premises it was foreboded that the Ministry would be inglorious and short-lived. But though philosophy never would teach us to discard all foresight, prudence, or calculation, she has been often compelled to acknowledge that in political affairs what is probable seldom happens. Time and accident enabled this rickety Ministry to disappoint the expectation of their opponents; and though their adherents scarcely pretend to attribute their success to any extraordinary merit in them, yet the splendour of victories abroad and the undisturbed possession of power at home, which have failed to procure them contemporary applause even from the

<sup>1</sup> [See *ante*, p. 132.]

vulgar much more any approbation from the wise, will not improbably obtain for them the encomiums and possibly the admiration of more remote historians and posterity. It must be acknowledged that, with the exception of Wellington in the field and Eldon on the Bench, any reverence they inspire must be from a distance<sup>1</sup>—from those who never transacted business in their offices, never heard their harangues in Parliament, nor approached their persons in private. With all such, mediocrity is their characteristic.

The perseverance of Mr. Brougham in exposing the Orders in Council before any new Administration was formed had made an impression both on the House and the country. The Ministers, though with some hesitation and much bad grace, began by announcing an intention to rescind them. That resolution, or rather concession, though too late to prevent a war with America,<sup>2</sup> disarmed the Opposition at home on the occurrence of that event, and satisfied the country that the hostile disposition to the United States and the narrow spirit of Mr. Perceval's policy had died with that Minister. The persuasion was strengthened by his personal and political friend, Mr. Stephen,<sup>3</sup> the real instigator of those impolitic measures, withdrawing himself from public discussions.

The Catholic question seemed, at first, to have gained by the death of its chief Ministerial opponent and the sort of interregnum which intervened. Mr.

<sup>1</sup> Major a longinquo reverentia.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [War broke out before the news of the repeal of the Orders in Council reached the United States.]

<sup>3</sup> [James Stephen (1758—1832), brother-in-law and an active supporter of Wilberforce in his efforts against the slave trade. A pamphlet published by him in 1805, entitled *War in Disguise*, is supposed to have suggested the Orders in Council. He retired from Parliament in 1815, disgusted at the refusal of the Government to support a bill for the registration of slaves.]

Canning, in June, moved a resolution to take it into consideration in the ensuing Session, and the motion was carried by 235 to 106. The main question had been lost two months before by 300 to 215! Such is the difference which a partial change of Ministry can make in a House of Commons! In the Lords, the alteration was not so sensible, for though Lord Wellesley lost a similar question only by the trifling majority of one, the numbers who voted for his motion and those who supported that of Lord Donoughmore on the preceding April differed only by 24.

I presented two bills on the subject of *ex officio* informations.<sup>1</sup> They were both rejected on the second reading, upon the opposition of Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough and Lord Chancellor Eldon. The object of one of them I have since had the good fortune to obtain.<sup>2</sup> The Attorney-General has it no longer in his power to keep an *ex officio* information hanging *in terrorem* over the head of an accused person for an indefinite period. The other mischief which I attempted to remove by these bills is, on the contrary, greatly extended in practice. It is now not only recognised as law, but actually considered as a matter of course, to hold to bail on an *ex officio* information any person accused of libel or other misdemeanour tending to a breach of the peace, though admitted not to amount to one. Subjects of this nature seldom excite much interest in the public, without exciting too much to render it practicable or perhaps prudent to legislate about them. It is part of the duty of a public man, and one which I have endeavoured to perform, to keep in view the

<sup>1</sup> [For Lord Holland's previous attempts to modify the law with respect to *ex officio* informations, see *ante*, p. 99.]

<sup>2</sup> In 1819.—V.H.



abuses of which at any one time he has felt the inconvenience without being able to rectify it, and to seize the opportunity of quickly and silently correcting them, when there is less prejudice or passion likely to be offered to him and less commendation or notice likely to attend his success.

All such considerations, and others of yet greater delicacy and importance, were soon afterwards overwhelmed by a marvellous tide of good fortune in our foreign wars. Lord Wellington displayed the promptitude and decision of a great general in the battle of Salamanca. General Marmont (whose elevation to command, by the favour or caprice of Napoleon, was destined to be fatal to the interests of that extraordinary man) exposed his army to disadvantage. Lord Wellington seized the moment; his movements were rapid, judicious, and fortunate, and his victory decisive.<sup>2</sup> The battle is considered by military men,

<sup>1</sup> "C'etoit un de mes caprices," said that great Prince of him at Elba. He had educated and fostered him like a son, he promoted him like a favourite, and he was basely betrayed by him at Fontainebleau in 1814. I remember Sir Lionel Copley, in 1799, defended his suspicions of General Moreau by a humorous, not to say nonsensical, coincidence: "When there are prospects of restorations by treachery," said he, "I do not like a General whose name begins with an *M*." What maledictions would he not have uttered when *Marmont* and *Morillo* were added to the list of *Monk* and *Moreau*!—V.H.

[Marmont, Duke of Ragusa (1774—1852) served in the artillery with Napoleon, and was his principal aide-de-camp in his Italian campaign of 1796. He reached the rank of Marshal in 1809, being promoted for his success at Wagram. He defended Paris in 1813 against the Allies while there was any hope of success, but afterwards went over to the enemy, and was among the number of those excepted by Napoleon from the amnesty on his return from Elba.]

<sup>2</sup> [Lord Wellington had just commenced his lunch, after a morning spent in fruitless manœuvring, when an important movement on the part of the French was announced. His practised eye at once took in Marmont's faulty dispositions. "By God!" he exclaimed, "that'll do!" and, hurling all his available troops at the weak spot, gained a signal victory.]

and, I believe, by the General himself, as the greatest action of his life. In its consequences it was scarcely less important than his subsequent more brilliant and celebrated, though perhaps not better deserved, victories. Madrid was entered by the English, our army advanced into Old Castile, and the siege of Cadiz was raised in the course of a month. Some of the fruits of this success were indeed lost by Lord Wellington's rash and obstinate attack on Burgos, and by the prudent manœuvres of General Clausel<sup>1</sup> on his flank. Yet the south of Spain was permanently relieved, and a prospect of liberation from the French held out to all Spaniards, which was ultimately realised in their favour. At home our hopes revived. Ministers wisely judged the moment propitious for the election of a new House of Commons, and they dissolved Parliament. The event justified their policy. The Parliament of 1812 was not less subservient to the Ministry than the one which had preceded it.

The theatre at Drury Lane, rebuilt in consequence of the labours of a Committee of which I was a member, but in which Mr. Whitbread was chief director, adviser, and agent, was opened in October. So rose within the compass of a year an age's work—a glorious theatre. Mr. Whitbread somewhat incautiously advertised for a competition of addresses to be spoken at the opening, with a promise of £100 to the successful candidate, and of entire impartiality in the selection.<sup>2</sup> We received many dozen copies of verses. One was worse than the other, and not one fit to be delivered. In this emergency, for it was no less, I applied to Lord Byron; and observed that nothing but such a prologue as he alone could write,

<sup>1</sup> [On whom the command of the French troops had devolved.]

<sup>2</sup> [This was the occasion of the publication of *Rejected Addresses*.]

and the authority of so great a poetical name as his, could extricate us from our distress and excuse us with the public for breaking faith with the poetasters. He kindly undertook the task. His verses, though not particularly adapted to stage recitation nor equal to some of his happiest effusions, will always be read for their poetry, and fully justified the expectation we had formed of them. He was singularly good-humoured and even docile in correcting, curtailing, or lengthening any passage at my request; but he earnestly and emphatically conjured me, when once "those fellows the actors" had touched or even seen them, not to allow so much as a comma to be displaced. We offered him a concealed place in the theatre to hear them delivered, but he vehemently exclaimed: "I would not be within fifty miles of the place, on that night, for the universe." It was well he was not. Mr. Elliston<sup>1</sup> recited them in a manner to drive an author mad.

When first Lord Byron agreed to write this address, he said to me, "I will try, but how shall I avoid that d——d Phoenix? We must not for the world have a feather of that rare bird, which is become as commonplace as a turtledove." Mr. Whitbread, in doubt whether Lord Byron would comply, composed an address himself of more than fifty lines, in which the burning and rebuilding of the theatre were very elaborately compared to the death and revival of the Phoenix, whose plumage, appearance, and natural history were very minutely described. I mentioned this circumstance to Mr. Sheridan, with the obvious remark that

<sup>1</sup> [Robert William Elliston (1774—1831), an actor of note, and a successful manager. He took the management of Drury Lane Theatre in 1819, and remained until 1826 when obliged by bankruptcy to resign the post.]



Byron felt about his task like a poet, and Whitbread like a schoolboy. "Like a schoolboy!" exclaimed Sheridan, who had seen the copy. "No, rather like a poulterer." There was no great harm and there was much pleasantry in this sarcasm on Mr. Whitbread's bad taste; but in many of Sheridan's observations on his benefactor and friend there was such malignity as too clearly showed that he was of a nature which, uneasy under the weight of an obligation, made him bitterly hate the man who had conferred it. His pride was mortified at the success of that interference of Mr. Whitbread, which he had himself solicited.<sup>1</sup> He rejected the offer of a private box, and I believe he never set his foot in the new theatre.

To the Russian campaign Napoleon had directed the efforts of his vast Empire; and to the diversion of his attention and forces towards that quarter, as well as to the spirit of the Spanish people, to the skill of Lord Wellington, and to the improving valour and discipline of the English armies, our great successes in the Peninsula are mainly to be ascribed. But the scene for which he prepared such sacrifices exhibited yet more dreadful disasters to his army. The French, after a course of victories more or less disputed, had advanced to Moscow, which they entered on September 14, 1812. Soon afterwards a large portion of that immense city was burnt to the ground, whether by accident or by design is still perhaps a problem, but, in either case, by the Russian inhabitants and not by the foreign invaders. For a time, however, the

<sup>1</sup>[When the Committee was formed in 1810 to rebuild the theatre, it was arranged that Sheridan and his family should be bought out. It was then stipulated that he should "have no concern or connection of any kind with the new undertaking." This Sheridan looked on as a matter of form, and was greatly enraged when Whitbread, as Chairman of the Committee, rigidly enforced the clause.]

deed was imputed to the French, and the heartless and horrid sacrifice of so many lives and so much property was stigmatised, with great parade of humanity, by our writers and politicians. When, however, the consequences of the conflagration were perceived to be injurious to the invading army as well as ruinous to the inhabitants, and when it was known that the French had made every exertion to extinguish, not to spread, the flames, then the incendiaries (whoever they were) changed into patriots ; and whether the act was perpetrated as a desperate military expedient by the Cabinet of Russia, or (as indeed is most probable) was the resource of an unprincipled band of robbers, with the hopes of plunder and impunity, it was extolled as an heroic exploit, an instance of self-devotion almost unparalleled in history. Such is the justice of public opinion during war. All sense of right and wrong is confounded ; passion, self-interest, and national prejudice govern the world.

The ravages of the fire certainly rendered the French occupation of Moscow insecure and inconvenient. They abandoned it in October, and cold weather setting in unusually early that season, many hardships of their retreat were known in England, and more disasters confidently expected at the meeting of the new Parliament in November. The House and the country were too much elated to listen to any recommendation of peace. Mr. Canning was said to have prepared a triumphant answer to the pacific language which he was persuaded that Mr. Whitbread would not fail to adopt in a speech and an amendment. That gentleman, having some inkling of the intentions of his opponent and rival, prudently gave up all thoughts of any motion, and concealed himself during the earlier part of the debate. He did not quit his retreat till

Mr. Canning, impatient of his absence and fearful of the question being put, had actually commenced his harangue. He then, by walking up the House with a complacent smile, somewhat disconcerted Mr. Canning, who, between the invectives he had prepared and the more temperate tone which the state of the debate seemed to enjoin, produced little or no effect on the House, disappointed the young members by a bad specimen of his eloquence, and conciliated no party by his ill-timed oration. But though the successes on the Continent furnished no opportunity of triumph to Mr. Canning over the friends of peace in the House of Commons, they strengthened the Ministry, and revived hopes long relinquished in the Court and the country.

A sum of money was voted by Parliament for the relief of the sufferers in Russia. Such a measure, as an indication of national feeling, might have some effect on the opinion of people on the Continent. Even if not judicious to propose it, it would have been invidious to oppose it. It was said, however, to mortify the pride rather than conciliate the goodwill of the Russian Government. It was, moreover, so much diverted from its destination in its progress to the sufferers, that it enriched agents and jobbers in a much larger proportion than it relieved the objects of compassion.

Napoleon, in his rapid march to Moscow and his subsequent delay in and about that capital, reckoned, from his personal knowledge, on the irresolute character of the Emperor Alexander, his inexperience in war, his distrust and suspicions of his own generals. Such qualities, he very reasonably argued, might induce him to submit to peace, rather than prolong a contest which must end in his utter ruin



or in his being rescued by skill and experience which would render some of his subjects too powerful for their Sovereign. But in acting on such views, Napoleon risked the consequences of a great military fault on a political speculation, which a little foresight might have shown him was an uncertain one, and which events proved to be a fallacious one. In his notions of the want of firmness of Alexander he was not mistaken; but he miscalculated his power, and overlooked the dangers which, on the other side, might operate on that very want of firmness, and did, in fact, counteract the first inclinations of the Czar, which were such as Napoleon foresaw. It required, in truth, as much resolution to make peace as to persevere in war. The spirit of the army,<sup>1</sup> the interest of the nobles, and the vanity of the Russian nation all conspired to deprecate any ignominious treaty; and their remonstrances were, I have been told, in a character which a Russian Sovereign well

<sup>1</sup> Sir Robert Wilson\* was sent from the army to Alexander, to inform him that they were resolved to consider any truce or pacification that he should sign as extorted from him by force or treachery; as the act of Romanzow,<sup>b</sup> not of their Sovereign; and they authorised Sir Robert to convey his opinion to His Imperial Majesty, as that of a foreign observer, that the army would not obey any orders founded on a pacification. The result of this and other intimations of the sort was the dismissal of Romanzow and the adoption of firmer councils. The Empress Dowager, as well as the Empress, took an opportunity of assuring Sir Robert Wilson that the Emperor was now determined to abandon all notion of temporising or yielding, and that he might be depended upon.

(From conversation with Sir R. Wilson, 1825).—V.H.

\* Sir Robert Wilson had just satisfactorily concluded a mission to Constantinople and St. Petersburg dealing with the negotiations for the re-establishment of peace between Turkey and Russia. He was at that time attached to the Russian army, with instructions to communicate all information to Lord Cathcart, the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg.

<sup>b</sup> Count Nicholas Romanzow (1753—1826) the Russian Chancellor.

knows how to decipher and is seldom disposed to neglect. These circumstances and the representations of Bernadotte, the Crown Prince of Sweden, overruled Alexander's wavering disposition, and made him a patriot and a conqueror in despite of his own judgment and in defiance of nature, which, though it had bestowed on him some little talent and dexterity, had denied him that energy of character which is generally the most requisite ingredient in the composition of a warrior and a hero.

The language of our Ministers at the end of 1812, if not pacific, was to the full as moderate as the temper of Parliament or of the country, and even more so than that of some of our Whig connections. Some manufacturing districts in the heart of the kingdom did, indeed, show a disposition to petition for peace; but there was no ground to suppose that our Government would insist on very unreasonable terms, and there was some reason to apprehend that an earnest clamour for peace out of doors might so far revive the spirit of Napoleon as to lead him to reject conditions to which he might with honour submit. I, accordingly, informed such of the petitioners as applied to me that I was "friendly to the object of their prayer, eager and anxious to promote it, but that I had some doubts of the policy of petitioning for it at that period, and could not engage, should I present their petitions, to found any motion upon them. I was apprehensive that such public demonstrations of the necessity of peace might raise the terms of the enemy, and I was not certain that our Ministers were not actually negotiating to obtain peace. If, however, I found that they took no steps for that purpose, I should ere long be anxious that the people by their earnest remonstrances might compel them to

do so." In most instances the petitioners acquiesced in my advice. Some few insisted on my presenting their petitions, but they were not sufficient either in number or weight to place the friends of peace in any awkward predicament, or to provoke the adverse party to sound their war whoop in Parliament with any effect.

In the meanwhile petitions of a different nature seemed to occupy the people. Several meetings had been called, both in towns and counties, to petition Parliament against any concession to the Roman Catholics. The friends of the measure, if not lukewarm, were timid. A strong persuasion that the sense of the country was decidedly hostile induced them to let many meetings pass without opposition, and to confine all their exertions for the cause within the walls of Parliament. Lord Lansdowne, however, and myself determined to meet the anti-Catholics in one of their fastnesses, Wiltshire. We attended a meeting at Devizes, and partly, we flattered ourselves, by argument, but chiefly by the assistance of the Protestant Dissenters and the Methodists, succeeded in defeating the projected petition. I claimed on that occasion from the active agents of the Methodists that assistance in favour of other Christians, which in 1811 they had promised me.<sup>1</sup> They fulfilled their promise most faithfully, and not only zealously co-operated with us at Devizes, but handsomely furnished me and others with the admirable and well-organised facilities which they have at their command, for disseminating such tracts and arguments as we deemed serviceable to the general cause of religious liberty and to Catholic Emancipation in particular.

The temperate conduct of Mr. Grattan and the

<sup>1</sup> [See *ante*, p. 102.]



argumentative eloquence of Mr. Plunket<sup>1</sup> had their weight with the House of Commons, who, on March 2, 1813, in a House of 488 members, passed, by a majority of 40, a resolution to take the claims of the Roman Catholics into immediate consideration and refer them to a Committee. After much consultation out of doors, in which Mr. Grattan, Mr. Canning, Mr. Ponsonby, Mr. Whitbread, Mr. Elliot,<sup>2</sup> Lord Grey, Lord Grenville, Lord Lansdowne, and myself took a part, a bill, founded on the mistaken principle of exacting different securities for the allegiance of Catholics and of Protestants, and in some other respects ill-framed, was brought into the House of Commons, and after various discussions passed the first stages and was committed on May 24.

The Speaker, Mr. Abbot,<sup>3</sup> a pragmatistical man of some talents for detail, but alike incapable of great views and generous feelings, moved to omit the clause admitting Roman Catholics to Parliament, and effected his intolerant purpose by a majority of four. Mr. Ponsonby somewhat hastily declared the boon, so limited, not to be worth the acceptance of the Catholics nor beneficial to the service of the country, and, moving that the Chairman should leave the chair, relinquished the bill altogether. The question was not brought forward that year in the Lords. At the termination of the Session Mr. Abbot, in an unusual and unparliamentary manner, thought proper to mention in his

<sup>1</sup> [William Conyngham Plunket, afterwards first Lord Plunket (1764—1854), at this time member for Dublin University. Lord Castlereagh declared that Mr. Plunket's speech on February 25 dealing with this question, "would never be forgotten." He was appointed Lord Chancellor of Ireland by Lord Grey in 1830.]

<sup>2</sup> [Gilbert Elliot, afterwards second Earl of Minto (1782—1859)].

<sup>3</sup> [Charles Abbot (1757—1829), created Lord Colchester in 1816. He held the post of Speaker of the House of Commons from 1802 until his elevation to the peerage.]

speech at the bar of the House of Lords the relinquishment of the measure in a Committee, as a firm determination to support our establishments. Lord Morpeth informed him privately before he withdrew from the House of Lords that he would in the ensuing Session bring his conduct before the Commons;<sup>1</sup> and when in a few years afterwards he retired from the chair, Lord William Russell objected to the usual vote of thanks, and founded his resistance to them on this very act of irregularity, originating in adulation and servility to the Crown, and rewarded, as it should seem, by a pension and a peerage.

In April, 1813, died my maternal uncle, General FitzPatrick,<sup>2</sup> one of the dearest friends I ever had. He was, I think, the most agreeable man I ever conversed with. One or two of his contemporaries might vie with him in wit and exceed him *perhaps* in some mental endowments, *certainly* in knowledge and learning; but none united with an equal portion of such qualifications his evenness of temper and spirits, his polished manners, pure taste, sound judgment, and worldly experience. His conversation was delightful in all seasons, situations, and societies, in the hour of confidence and affliction, and in the moments of relaxation and carelessness. He shone equally as a

<sup>1</sup> [Lord Morpeth brought a motion in April, 1814, that the address of the Speaker on the occasion referred to should not be treated as a precedent; but it was defeated by a large majority. His action, however, had the desired effect, and since that time no Speaker in his address has referred to measures which have not been passed by the House of Commons.]

<sup>2</sup> [Hon. Richard FitzPatrick, second son of John, first Earl of Upper Ossory, and Evelyn, daughter of John, Earl Gower. He was born in 1748, and, entering the Army, rose to the rank of General.]

Mr. Creevey, in mentioning his death, says of him, "I thought you might like to hear these particulars respecting the end of by far the most clever of the quiet class I have ever seen, and the most perfect judgt. of any class."

friend, an adviser, or a companion. He had been the associate of Mr. Fox from their first entrance into life, and was to the close of it the man on whose friendship he most implicitly relied in private, in whose conversation he most delighted, and on whose judgment and advice he most depended in all grave and public affairs. He had as much scorn of a Court, and as much disdain of all petty objects of avarice and ambition, as Mr. Fox himself; he was, too, full as inflexible, where principle or high spirit required firmness. He had, however, less ardour in his pursuits; he had perhaps less popular feeling, though not less party honour; in short, he was less susceptible of that glorious enthusiasm which stimulates genius into action, than his friend. He sometimes allayed the impetuosity, and yet more frequently checked the too unbounded confidence, which the sanguine and artless disposition of Mr. Fox was inclined to repose on the efficacy of a just cause and the co-operation of accidental connections.

He had, at an early period, been active in public life, and, both as Secretary in Ireland with the Duke of Portland and Secretary at War in 1784,<sup>1</sup> had shown much firmness and talents for business and even some powers of application. But he was constitutionally indolent, and habitual indulgence of his passion for women and play increased that infirmity so much, that in the Administration of 1806 he was a cypher in Parliament.

The death of Mr. Fox extinguished the few sparks of ambition that remained in him; and although to preserve the Russell interest in Bedfordshire he obligingly consented to be brought forward for that

<sup>1</sup> [April to December, 1783. He accompanied the Duke of Portland to Ireland in 1782.]



county, he took little interest in politics after losing the friend of his youth and the leader of his party. The gout, and yet more the remedies taken to relieve it, weakened his constitution. Without any actual depression of spirits, his exertions in the intercourse of private society grew fainter and fainter, and the charms of his conversation were often questioned by those of his new acquaintance who were not at the pains to draw them forth. As a poet he was best known for his share in the *Rolliad* and other political pieces—a species of composition in which nobody but Sir Charles Hanbury Williams ever excelled him; but there are many other light poems of his writing extant, both in manuscript and in print, which for ease, sprightliness, feeling, and harmony would bear comparison with the happiest effusions of Prior. They should some day be collected and published. I found the following lines among his papers, entitled,

## MY OWN EPITAPH

Whose turn is next? This monitory stone  
Replies, "Vain Passenger, perhaps thy own."  
If idly curious thou shouldst seek to know,  
Whose relics mingle with the dust below,  
Enough to tell thee that his destined span  
On Earth he dwelt, and like thyself was Man.  
Nor distant far th' inevitable day,  
When thou, poor Mortal, shalt, like him, be clay.  
Thro' life he walked, unemulous of fame,  
Nor wished beyond it to preserve a name,  
Content so friendship on his humble bier  
Dropped but the heartfelt tribute of a tear,  
Tho' countless ages should unconscious glide  
Nor learn that he has ever lived or died.

His illness and death prevented my attendance in Parliament for some weeks during the spring of 1813. Lord Grenville during that time supported the inroads made on the monopoly of the East India Company

on the occasion of the renewal of their Charter, in a very able speech.<sup>1</sup> He took this line without consulting Mr. Tierney, the President of the Board of Control in his Administration. Mr. Tierney was perhaps too much wedded to the narrow policy which usually governed the Company, and he was certainly nettled at this mark of want of confidence from Lord Grenville. He, on the other hand, had not been pleased at Mr. Tierney's twice declining an offer from the Marquis of Buckingham to bring him into Parliament. Such personal estrangements produced no quarrel in the party; but when in 1818 and 1819 difference of opinion on public matters led to a separation, they diminished the regret of individuals, and perhaps accelerated an inevitable event.

The conduct of Mr. Whitbread on the business of the Princess of Wales yet more naturally excited feelings of resentment in different members of the party. I do not wish to relate at length any of the transactions connected with that lady's conduct, case, or fortunes. The documents are all preserved and published; and the whole business, though it agitated the public at various periods, in 1806<sup>2</sup> and 1813, in 1820 and 1821, was at all times degrading to the national

<sup>1</sup> [It is interesting to note that Lord Grenville's chief objection to the policy of the Government was, that they were treating the interests of the East India Company as of the highest importance, whereas he considered that those of the British Crown should have the foremost place. He maintained that a public assertion should be made of the sovereignty of the Crown in India and the power of Parliament to make laws for the general welfare of that vast country.]

<sup>2</sup> [See vol. ii. p. 149, in the earlier portion of Lord Holland's Memoir. In that year, owing to a report that the Princess had been delivered of an illegitimate child, a Committee, consisting of Lords Erskine, Ellenborough, Grenville, and Spencer, with Sir S. Romilly, the Solicitor-General, as their legal adviser, was appointed to examine into her conduct. They stated in their report that there was no vestige of truth in the primary charge, but that in their opinion the levity of

character, disgusting and tiresome to those who viewed public affairs with any philosophy, nearly devoid of interest to me, and entirely devoid of it to posterity.

Suffice it to say that the Regent, on the death of Mr. Perceval, wished once more to revive inquiries into the conduct of the Princess, with the prospect of getting rid of her ; while she, availing herself of the hopes excited by the increasing importance of the heir-presumptive, her daughter, was studious to court popularity and pity for the purpose of gratifying her resentment and mortifying her husband and persecutor. Hence he referred all the documents and papers relating to the investigation of 1806, together with suggestions of new matter of suspicion, to his Ministers and Privy Council ; and she, on hearing the rumour thereof, wrote to the Speaker of the House of Commons and to the Prince Regent himself. She consulted Mr. Brougham professionally ; and Mr. Whitbread, secretly instigated by Mr. Creevey, eagerly espoused her cause both prospectively and retrospectively.

He<sup>1</sup> thereby involved Sir Samuel Romilly, Lord Erskine, and Lord Ellenborough, and indeed the whole Ministry of 1806 and the leaders of the party with whom he was acting, in one sweeping charge

her behaviour on several occasions was worthy of censure. The matter again came to the front in 1813, owing to the Prince Regent's refusal in October of the preceding year to allow the Princess to see her daughter, although she had gone specially to Windsor for that purpose. Furious at the insult, she wrote the letters referred to in the text to her husband and the Speaker of the House of Commons. A debate in that House ensued, and the letters and papers were referred to a Committee of the Privy Council, who reported that under the circumstances they considered that the intercourse between mother and daughter should be regulated and restricted.]

<sup>1</sup> [Whitbread.]



of base servility to the Prince and injustice to a persecuted and innocent woman. In a yet more unfriendly manner he concealed his intentions from those he was so ready to suspect and accuse. So far from seeking any private explanation before he made a public attack, he walked down to the House of Commons with Lord Grey on March 17, and never consulted him on the communications he had received from Mrs. Lisle,<sup>1</sup> which he read that very day in his place; though they, and yet more the remarks of Mr. Whitbread upon them, tended to inculcate the Commissioners and the Cabinet of 1806 in a transaction which they alone could explain and of which he himself was utterly ignorant. The statements he made were in themselves incorrect, the inferences he drew unfair, and the impression he laboured to produce most injurious to the character of persons he professed to respect. The four Commissioners, Lord Ellenborough, Lord Erskine, Lord Spencer, and Lord Grenville, vindicated themselves on a subsequent day in the House of Lords; but the intemperate language of Lord Ellenborough, who nicknamed Whitbread "Folly," and said his assertions were "as false as Hell," somewhat diverted attention from the rashness of the popular orator to the violence of the Chief Justice, and divided the censure and indignation of the Whig party pretty equally between the two injudicious combatants. The result of the whole affair was to recognise the right in the Prince Regent to regulate all intercourse with his daughter, to convey a strong public censure of any revival of proceedings against the Princess, and to show that the power to which her

<sup>1</sup> [The Hon. Mrs. Lisle, a lady in attendance on the Princess, and a witness in the case.]

husband had been raised, and in the exercise of which he was so strongly supported in Parliament, had not diminished one tittle of his personal unpopularity.

Before the Princess of Wales made her appeal to Parliament and the public, her counsel solemnly but secretly conjured her not to proceed, if on recollection she could charge herself with any impropriety or levity of conduct, much less with anything approaching to criminality<sup>1</sup>; but she, with that courage which characterised her throughout and supplied the place, if it did not imply the reality, of innocence, was all for defiance. Her advisers had, perhaps, not so much confidence in her veracity as admiration of her intrepidity, and were not entirely relieved from their anxiety about the consequences by her boldness in facing them. But shortly afterwards all their fears were unexpectedly allayed by a manœuvre of Lord Moira. In the hope of alarming Mr. Whitbread with the consequences of any serious investigation about the conduct of the Princess, that zealous but injudicious friend of the Prince spontaneously communicated all the charges and, if I mistake not, all the evidence that had been prepared against Her Royal Highness, to her immediate friends and advisers, *viz.*, Mr. Whitbread, Mr. Creevey, and Mr. Brougham. From that time they knew the extent of the case against their client, and, deeming it insufficient, proceeded in good heart, without hesitation or delay.

In the course of these transactions, and yet more in those which ensued, relating to the pecuniary provision for Her Royal Highness and her departure

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Brougham related to me this and the following facts many years afterwards, and when he could have no object in deceiving me.—V.H.

from England in 1814, they had opportunities of discovering in the character of their royal client many qualities less respectable than that courage which was termed by her friends intrepidity, and to which her enemies gave a harsher name. She showed a total disregard of truth, and a want of all gratitude, justice, or feeling to those who served her. As I do not wish to revert to this subject, I shall here mention my notion of the real solution of all the conduct of this exalted but uninteresting lady. I am satisfied that she was always in a state bordering on insanity, and sometimes actually insane. I should add, however, that this persuasion of a contemporary is founded on a knowledge of her actions and language *as repeated by others*, not on any personal observation.<sup>1</sup>

I never conversed with her but three times. On the first occasion, when I met her accidentally in a small and crowded inn in the Apennines, she conducted herself not only with courtesy, but with great taste, delicacy, and propriety. In two visits which I paid Her Royal Highness at Naples, her manner was hurried and her conversation strange; but there was nothing indecorous or incoherent enough to infer any positive aberration of intellect, though sufficient to suggest to my mind the possibility of her being liable, as well as others of her family, to that dreadful infirmity. A strange

<sup>1</sup> I have questioned persons who attended her medically. The duties and delicacies of their profession would, of course, prevent their acknowledging such facts, if ascertained by their professional attendance, even after her death; but the manner in which such a hint was received, the official tone of every answer given to my inquiries, the manifest embarrassment those inquiries occasioned, and the absence of all direct contradiction or disposition to explode the idea as absurd, confirmed me in my previous surmises. I have no doubt she was mad.—V.H.



fatality seemed to attend her and all who approached her. Those who accused and those who defended her, the Prince, the Ministers, the Parliament, and the people, all who took any prominent part either in her condemnation or triumph, degraded themselves, and appear to me to have lost all discretion and judgment. The truth is that the frequency and violence of the ferment raised by the petty and unprofitable spite of an irritated husband, and the levities, irregularities, and extravagances of a lady, neither young nor handsome, were severe comments on the institution of Monarchy, and the zeal inspired in her favour by her persecutions, real or supposed, a no less strong proof of the childish love for Royalty still prevalent in this country. Strange indeed that neither war nor peace, laws nor liberties, could excite so much anxiety in a free and civilised nation as the personal character and comfort of two individuals, who had nothing but their rank about them to raise interest or even curiosity!

I revert to my narrative. The disasters of the French in the north had compelled Napoleon to drain his army in Spain; and that circumstance, combined with the skill and vigilance of Lord Wellington and the unabated aversion of the Spaniards to the French, led to many brilliant successes of the English in the Peninsula. In the spring of 1813 Joseph and his Government abandoned Madrid, and before the end of June Lord Wellington had gained the glorious battle of Vittoria, nearly on the spot where the Black Prince defeated Du Guesclin four hundred and fifty years before.<sup>1</sup> Lord Wellington, by the rapidity and skill of his movements, executed in a masterly style.

<sup>1</sup> [At the battle of Navarette in 1367.]

by Sir G. Murray,<sup>1</sup> his very able Quarter-Master-General, had intercepted and surprised the French. Indeed, the signal victory he obtained at Vittoria was, like that of Salamanca, as much owing to the superiority of his generalship as to the courage of his troops. In the course of the ensuing three months he drove the French beyond the frontiers, and soon became with his English, Spanish, and Portuguese force the invader of France. Our Ministers were too much elated with this success, with the disastrous retreat of the French from Moscow, and with the prospect of the deliverance of Germany by a Confederacy of Sweden, Russia, and Prussia, to make any reasonable overtures of peace to the Emperor on his return to Paris.

Anxious as I was for peace, I did not think it prudent to urge it upon Parliament during the early part of the Session, from the following considerations :

1st. It was just possible that some negotiations might be on foot, and that public discussion might be injurious to them.

2ndly. Debate would have betrayed some difference of opinion among our own friends; for Lord Grenville and others would have recommended our insisting upon terms yet more extravagant than any which Ministers were likely to suggest.

3rdly. If there had been, as was shrewdly suspected, two parties in the Cabinet, one disposed to negotiate with the Emperor Napoleon, the other to stickle for a change of government in France, a motion for peace in Parliament and the discussions thereupon would have tended to strengthen the latter

<sup>1</sup> [Sir George Murray (1772—1846), second son of Sir William Murray, of Ochertyre. He was promoted to the rank of Major-General in 1812, and, entering the House of Commons in 1823, became Secretary of State for the Colonies in the Duke of Wellington's Administration of 1828.]

rather than the more pacific and moderate division of our counsels.

4thly and lastly. I must acknowledge that I thought a Ministry, composed of Lords Liverpool, Sidmouth, and Castlereagh, to the full as likely to adopt moderate counsels, from a sense of their convenience, as the Parliament or the public, in their then state of elation, to enforce them.

In the meanwhile, the silence of the Allied Powers during the winter had impressed the people of France with a belief that their pretensions were unreasonable, and the spirit and genius of Napoleon enabled him to draw forth once more the immense resources of his Empire, to recruit his armies, and to resume the field in the month of April. His first efforts were fortunate; but he, like his adversaries, lost the opportunity of acting with moderation and magnanimity in the hour of prosperity. He agreed, indeed, to an armistice, and affected to negotiate for peace; but he was so unreasonable in his demands, and so obviously averse to any permanent adjustment of the interests of all parties, that not only were hostilities renewed, but the Court of Vienna was provoked by him or induced by the Allies to join in the Confederacy against him. I am inclined to ascribe the fluctuation in the Austrian counsels to real weakness and irresolution, and not to duplicity. The latter quality, however, is the weapon most congenial to the taste and best adapted to the faculties of that cowardly and ignorant Court, when it wishes to resent an injury or ruin an enemy.

Before Parliament broke up I urged, in a speech, a motion, and a protest, my conviction that a favourable period for negotiation had been allowed to elapse; and though the course of events, and above



all the misconduct of the French Government, retrieved the error, I do not repent having recorded such an opinion, or dread the judgment of such impartial persons hereafter as will be at the pains of examining all the circumstances in which we are placed.

On the rupture of the truce the tide of success set in for the Confederates. In number and in spirit they overpowered the French, and not only the fortune but the genius of Napoleon seems for a short season to have abandoned him.<sup>1</sup> He permitted his enemies to encircle and his allies to betray him in a manner that half his usual military skill or political sagacity would have prevented. This period of unaccountable error terminated in the great battle of Leipsic on October 18, 1813, a battle fatal to the predominance of Napoleon in Europe, and the only action in his eventful career derogatory to his skill as a General. He was circumvented and defeated in a way that persons unpractised in war had for several weeks predicted that he would be, and by armies commanded by men not only inferior to him, but [in] no wise eminent for talents, experience, or judgment. One of the critical moments of this great battle was decided in favour of the Allies by the promptitude and gallantry of Sir Robert Wilson, who, without any actual command, rallied a large body

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Fazakerley, a man of accuracy and veracity, soon after seeing Napoleon at Elba in 1814 or 1815, related to me the following admission of that extraordinary man, and has frequently alluded to or repeated it since. He said that in all prudence he ought to have made peace immediately after the victories of Bautzen and Lutzen, and before the great battle of Leipsic. "Mais," continued he, "je me croyois assez fort et je me suis trompé. C'étoit là assurément le moment de faire la paix, aussi l'aurois-je faite si je ne m'avois pas cru plus fort que je ne l'étois en effet." A singular admission, especially for one not apt to be candid in acknowledging his errors.—V.H.

of troops when yielding to the fire of the enemy—a brilliant exploit which the Emperor Alexander in person rewarded by bestowing on the field great military honours on Sir Robert.<sup>1</sup> He received also in the course of a few days from every member of the Confederacy some of those tokens of approbation, which they were afterwards base and silly enough to recall.

The news of the victory of Leipsic reached London on the eve of the meeting of Parliament. The Prince Regent's Speech was, I believe, altered to introduce an allusion to that great event. It was admirably composed. Some exultation was natural, and it was there; but it was not insolent, and there was more moderation towards both France and America than could well have been expected. Neither Lord Grey nor Mr. Ponsonby came up to the opening of Parliament. Lord Grenville had shown an inclination not only to support the war, but to urge Ministers to continue it, with a view of wresting further conquests from France: he was even disposed to *lament* the Spanish campaigns as having exhausted our means of assisting our Allies in the North. From these topics, however, he was dissuaded by Lord Grey, with whom he corresponded. The apprehension of Whitbread moving for peace, so far from deterring Lord Grenville from war-like language, manifestly furnished an additional inducement. The temperate Speech from the Throne disarmed all persons who were disposed to move for peace, and Mr. Whitbread defeated all projects, if there were any, for widening

<sup>1</sup> [Lord Holland is probably mistaken as to the scene of this exploit. An incident such as is described above certainly took place at the battle of Lutzen: and the Emperor decorated Wilson with the cross of the Order of St. George, taken from his own neck, at a review some three weeks later.]

the breach between him and the Grenville branch of Opposition, by supporting Ministers cordially on questions of subsidies, militia, and war. "Not the first time," observed Mr. Grenville, in a tone of disappointment, "that he has shown dexterity in avoiding an actual rupture."

In the Lords, the Duke of Sussex and Lord Wellesley expressed their exultation at the events of the campaign, and their approbation of the temper in which the Speech was conceived. Lord Grenville told Lord Wellesley, when he sat down, that he differed with him and must animadvert on his being so very pacific; but on my expostulating with him and requesting him to forbear, with an acknowledgment that if he disclaimed the pacific sentiments of Lord Wellesley I must attempt to maintain them or leave the House, he very good-humouredly abstained from all allusion to what Lord Wellesley had said, and confined himself to the speech which he had originally intended to deliver. His expressions were measured, but the general tone of his language was more warlike than I liked or approved. The impression that it was more warlike than that of Ministers was prevalent in the House at the time and in the country afterwards. I felt a repugnance to any agreement with Ministers rather than with my friends, and to avoid all such appearance I gave a silent vote for the address.

Mr. Canning, jealous of the applause bestowed on Lord Grenville's speech by the lovers of war, came up some days afterwards and delivered a very flowery harangue, in which he arrogated to the framers of former defeated confederacies a large share of the merit of this, the only successful one. He affected to distrust the Whigs in their support of



the Ministry, and laboured to render the contest as personal as he could against Napoleon. He failed in his views. The Opposition, throughout the Session, persisted in the line they had adopted at the commencement of it. They purposely and studiously commended the temperate language of Government, augured well of success, either in negotiation or by arms, from the moderation of the views of Ministers, and exhorted them to act up to their professions by abstaining from all interference with the Government of France, and from all endeavours to impose any particular dynasty either on a friendly or a conquered people.

One transaction only was open to any animadversion. On the reverses of the French in Germany, a counter-revolution had taken place in Holland. From the thoughtless impetuosity of the multitude or from some cabal among designing politicians, the populace, not content with restoring the Prince of Orange, bestowed on him the title of King, which his family had never enjoyed and which his countrymen had in better times regarded with aversion.<sup>1</sup> The Prince himself would have been satisfied, possibly better satisfied, with the Stadtholderate. Even the English Ministers disclaimed any direct participation in the measure, though some of them, and more of their supporters at Court, could not suppress their triumph at the suppression of the very name of Republic,

<sup>1</sup> [William, Prince of Orange, had fled to England in 1795, after the occupation of Amsterdam by General Pichegru. A Republican Government was then established until 1806, when Napoleon forced his brother Louis on the unwilling people as their King. In 1814 the tide turned against France (Holland had been annexed by that country in 1813), and the Dutch rose in revolt. The Prince of Orange was recalled, and was proclaimed King of Holland and Belgium under the title of William I. The Monarchy was made hereditary, and a Liberal Constitution was drawn up.]

which the fashionable and servile seemed to regard like an indecent word, unfit to be mentioned in company. The war, as Mr. Sheridan observed, which had originated in an alarm lest all Europe should become a Republic, ended in converting every Republic therein into a Monarchy or a dependency on some Monarchy.

The events in Holland encouraged the Prince Regent and others in their hopes (strange ones for a Prince of the House of Brunswick) of restoring the Bourbons in France on the principle of divine hereditary right, ill-concealed under the specious title of legitimacy. Lord Castlereagh, however, who left England for Holland after an adjournment of Parliament, unusually long, at the end of December, 1813, certainly neither harboured nor encouraged at that period any such design. Soon after his arrival in Holland, and early in January, 1814, the great bodies of the Allied armies passed the frontiers of France on the Spanish, Swiss, and German sides, and were pressing forward with unequal but uninterrupted success to the centre of the Empire. Napoleon agreed to and even offered negotiations; and Lord Castlereagh, as English Plenipotentiary, accepted his passports, and met the Ministers of the various Confederate Powers and General Caulaincourt, the French negotiator, at Chatillon, with the professed purpose, and, as I believe, with the earnest expectation of concluding a treaty of peace with the Emperor Napoleon.

The situation of the plenipotentiaries was singular. Lord Castlereagh and General Caulaincourt were personally sincere in their efforts for a peace, which their respective Courts would perhaps have disclaimed, and would certainly have regretted. Prussia

and Russia and the other Powers, some from pusillanimity, some from revenge, some from distrust of Austria, were desirous of dethroning Napoleon; while Austria herself would have willingly promoted that object, provided the Regency of France could have been secured to the Empress Maria Louisa and the succession to her son. In such counsels the Court of Vienna flattered itself that it could, for a season at least, obtain considerable ascendancy. In the meanwhile the Duke of Angoulême, secretly instigated by the Prince Regent and invited perhaps through Lord Bathurst by Lord Wellington, joined the armies of the latter General, in spite of the discouraging but at that time correct remark of his cousin the Duke of Bourbon, who observed, "*Il s'agit de nous nulle part.*"

The hope of separating Austria from the Confederacy, by awakening her jealousy and gratifying her well-known appetite for territory, deterred Napoleon from adopting the frank and direct line which would have best served his interests as well as suited his character. Hence, when, in the course of his spirited and almost miraculous defence, his efforts were crowned with any transient success, he more naturally than wisely recoiled from the ignominious necessity of signing a peace with hostile armies in the heart of his Empire, and he had recourse to disgraceful subterfuges to elude it. But his military genius never shone brighter than in that painful campaign. It was seconded by the valour of his army, now comparatively small, and by the spirit [of] his officers, the younger part of whom more especially displayed a devotion to his cause and to his person seldom, if ever, exceeded in history. But he must have perceived that the mass of the people, harassed by long and repeated sacrifices, distrustful perhaps lest high thoughts would



return with any favourable change of fortune, and unanimated by those illusions and hopes of liberty which invigorated their defence of national independence in the early part of the Revolution, were comparatively indifferent to the contest. They plotted, indeed, neither for the Bourbons nor for the Republic, but they sighed for peace. They listened, too, with more complacency than became good subjects, or even good citizens, to those arguments which his own late conduct at Prague had rendered so plausible, *viz.*, that he was the main obstacle to the attainment of general pacification.

If such were the pardonable feelings of quiet, meek, and peaceable spirits in the provinces, baser motives concurred with a desire for tranquillity to engage some factions in Paris in a design of deposing the great man whom they had contributed to elevate and to corrupt, and whom they had for many years so abjectly served. Many, and among them Prince Talleyrand,<sup>1</sup> had long since forfeited his favour. They had attempted in the hour of his adversity to weaken his authority at home. If his fortunes were restored, they thought they could not be forgiven. They were, therefore, not merely ready to sacrifice Napoleon for peace, but they were secretly desirous that the Allies should demand and obtain that species of payment for the article.

With this view Talleyrand and, I believe, the Duke Dalberg<sup>2</sup> fixed upon a M. Vitrolles, a man of bad private character, to convey a message to

<sup>1</sup> [Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord (1754—1838). He quarrelled with Napoleon in 1808 when Secretary for Foreign Affairs; and after that time sided secretly with the Bourbons, though he retained his office.]

<sup>2</sup> [Emmerich-Joseph de Worms, Duc de Dalberg (1773—1833), a friend and follower of Talleyrand.]

the Austrians.<sup>1</sup> Their object was confined to this simple inquiry: "*What conditions would be imposed on France, should France dethrone or abandon Napoleon?*" They were not aware that the man they had selected was, in truth, a secret agent of the Bourbons. Their very precautions enabled him to render them his dupes. They prudently abstained from all writing. Talleyrand furnished him with a ring known to Prince Metternich, which would give weight to his assertion that he was the bearer of a message from Paris. He arrived at Chatillon with some difficulty. The Allies were at that moment much exasperated with what they termed the subterfuges and bad faith of Napoleon. They were on the eve of breaking off the negotiations. They were disposed to insist on his deposal, but still irresolute and possibly divided as to what revolution to substitute as the price of peace to France. Austria had enforced her own predisposition in favour of a Regency and the succession of the King of Rome, by observing that the silence and apathy of all parts of France within the lines of the Allies proved the contempt and oblivion into which the persons and cause of the Bourbons had fallen. That just remark was towards the end of the conferences at Chatillon more weakened in appearance than in reality, by the declarations in favour of the exiled family at Bordeaux, on the entrance of the English troops, on March 12, 1814.

Though there was hardly time for all the details and intrigues of that transaction to have reached

<sup>1</sup> [Lord Holland gives the same account of these intrigues in his *Foreign Reminiscences*, p. 297. He there relates that the kind of token sent to Metternich is uncertain. It was either the ring, a few words in the Duc de Dalberg's handwriting enclosed in a button, or a note in Lord Castlereagh's writing to the Princesse de Vaudemont, as a proof of his being confidentially connected with Talleyrand. This latter story was told him by Lord Goderich in 1833.]

Chatillon, the Allies were probably aware that it was the contrivance of one or two busy merchants connected with England by commerce and by blood, and instigated by foreigners or emigrants rather than any spontaneous effusion of popular feeling which led to the display of the White Cockade in that city, where the distresses occasioned by war with England are, however, always more felt than in any other part of France.<sup>1</sup> The officious loyalty of Mr. Lynch, the head of an Irish house in Bordeaux, however agreeable to Louis XVIII. or to the Prince Regent, would hardly have swayed the determination of the Congress of Chatillon. But when M. Vitrolles, after producing for his credentials the ring of Prince Talleyrand, artfully gave to his mission the character of a communication rather than an inquiry, and asserted that Talleyrand and others had formed their plot and were anxiously expecting at Paris the Allied armies and a prompt declaration in favour of the exiled family of Bourbon, the Austrians themselves were overpowered by such evidence; and those who at all times would have preferred the triumph of hereditary despotism over any other form of government, naturally concluded that considerations of prudence were no longer in the way of their favourite measure.

Such, according to the report of many well-informed persons to me,<sup>2</sup> was the intrigue by which the

<sup>1</sup> [Lord Holland somewhat minimises the popular desire, which, according to other accounts, was manifested in the South for a restoration of the Bourbons. The Duke of Wellington himself was certainly in favour of the movement, though in conformity with instructions from the English Government he refrained from any expression of his personal views.]

<sup>2</sup> I had many of the facts, more in detail than here related, directly from Mr. Gallois,\* and indirectly from Dalberg himself; and they

\* [Jean Antoine Gallois, French politician, and friend of Lord Holland. He died in 1828.]



Sovereigns were ultimately led to espouse the cause of the Bourbons. It is certain that when the armies did arrive at Paris the Allies were much surprised to find no conspiracy for the Bourbons actually organised; and I believe that Talleyrand, on the first explanation, was no less surprised at finding that his name had been quoted to the Sovereigns as advising the restoration of the Bourbons. He was too quicksighted not to make a virtue of necessity, and too dexterous, when he found the restoration unavoidable, not to father the spurious child which had been so unexpectedly sworn to him by the prostitute who had conceived it. The Prince Regent, who had hardly concealed his alarm lest the conferences at Chatillon should terminate in a treaty, and who, from petty motives and despicable prejudices incident to his nature and his station, had always panted for the restoration of the Bourbons, represented and probably thought this accidental consummation of his wishes the result of his personal sagacity and great exertions in their cause. When this was related to Mr. Sheridan, and it was added that the Prince Regent assumed the merit of the campaigns and the termination of them in the restoration of Louis XVIII., he drily remarked, "No, surely! I thought it was the abundant harvest on which he chiefly plumed himself."

The facility with which the vanity of His Royal were confirmed or corroborated by the concurrence of other accounts of the less material facts from several others, and especially Pozzo di Borgo,<sup>b</sup> whose interesting relation of these transactions I had heard before I knew of Vitrolles's intrigue, with which it was so far from being inconsistent that it tallied exactly in one main particular, the surprise of Alexander at finding no concerted plan for the Bourbons on his arrival at Paris.—V.H.

<sup>b</sup> [Count Pozzo di Borgo (1764—1842), diplomatist; afterwards Russian Ambassador in England.]

Highness often admitted and seemed to believe that great actions to which he could not have contributed originated with him, was on many occasions ludicrous. He spoke of battles, at which it was notorious he could not have been present, in the direct terms of an eye witness; and he gravely remonstrated with Mr. Westmacott<sup>1</sup> for omitting him in the sketch of a *bas-relief* which represented the battle of Waterloo. It must, however, be acknowledged that he might more plausibly attribute the restoration of the Bourbons in 1814 to his personal exertions than at first sight appears, for there is reason to suspect that he not only sent the Duke of Angoulême to Bordeaux, but that he intrigued at home and abroad to convert his own Ministers and Foreign Powers to the persuasion of the propriety and even necessity of that measure. In the military events he had, indeed, no share, as he never quitted England and never witnessed an action. They were too various and extensive for any one not conversant in such matters even to recount very intelligibly, but they are fortunately too well known to require a place in such notes as I have undertaken to write.

Of the Allies, the Prussians showed most zeal and enterprise; the Russians most method and constancy; and the Austrians least military skill or prowess. It was remarkable that the armies of those three Powers defeated the first General of his age at Leipsic, pursued him into the heart of his populous Empire, and finally wrested from him his capital and his crown, without establishing one military reputation or furnishing history with one name which, either in war or politics, will swell the catalogue of great men. Schwarzenberg was a mere cypher; Blucher

<sup>1</sup> [Richard Westmacott, R.A. (1775—1856), the eminent sculptor.]

at best a dashing huzzar ; and among the Russians there was not a single man prominent enough to require either notice or character. Never were such vast objects obtained by more insignificant personages. It is gratifying to an Englishman to observe that these remarks do not apply to Lord Wellington. He was a great man in the field, and a more considerable one in a Cabinet than his sorry exhibitions in the Senate led the Parliamentary public to suppose.

When he resumed offensive operations in the Peninsula he had to contend with Soult, the Duke of Dalmatia, one of the ablest of the captains of Napoleon. He baffled all his manœuvres, and gained more than one pitched battle over his troops ; and then closed his brilliant campaign by a hard-fought action in which he was successful, on April 10, near Toulouse, so many days after the entrance of the Allies into Paris, the decree of the Senate, and even the abdication of Napoleon, that either great neglect had occurred in conveying intelligence to the French generals, or Marshal Soult is answerable for an unnecessary effusion of blood,<sup>1</sup> like that imputed to William III. at St. Denis, near Mons, in 1678.

Of the transactions immediately connected with the abdication of Napoleon at Fontainebleau and the counter-revolution at Paris, it would be superfluous to speak more.<sup>2</sup> Louis, long represented as

<sup>1</sup> [Lord Wellington received the news of the events in Paris on the night of the 11th. The information was brought by Colonel Cooke, accompanied by a French officer, who had orders to communicate with the Marshals.]

<sup>2</sup> [Briefly, the situation was as follows. After the attack of the Allies on Paris of March 30, Marmont, who was in command of the French forces, capitulated ; and the populace, without Napoleon to lead them, acquiesced. A provisional Government was proclaimed under the leadership of Talleyrand ; the Emperor was dethroned on April 2 ; and Louis XVIII. was made king. In the meanwhile Napoleon



dying, revived with the thoughts of reigning. He came to Grillon's Hotel, Albemarle Street.<sup>1</sup> London was crowded with equipages and attendants covered with that ancient badge of pure hereditary despotism, the white cockade, which, whether as the symbol of the Stuarts or of the Bourbons, would have been construed into an overt act of treason at almost any other period since the acknowledgment of the Parliamentary title of the House of Brunswick. The Prince Regent with his own hand bestowed the Garter on Louis. Much emotion was affected on the occasion; but the two actors were too unwieldy, too old, and above all too well known, to excite any great interest in that flat and insipid exhibition.

The French King was conveyed to his native shore from Dover by the Duke of Clarence. On his arrival at Paris, the same white symbol of ancient servitude and modern rebellion was substituted for the tricolor cockade, long endeared to the French army by the

himself remained at Fontainebleau. The army was on his side, but the Marshals were tired of the unequal combat, and forced him to abdicate in favour of his infant son. This proposal was refused by the Allies, and under pressure he signed an unconditional surrender on April 6.]

<sup>1</sup> Still a hotel in 1825 and formerly a house of Lord Monson's. The Houses of York, Stuart, and Bourbon all adopted white as their emblems and divine hereditary right to the government of their fellow creatures as their fundamental maxim.\* Even English soldiers were permitted to wear it, a circumstance which provoked the following epigram from the pen of Mr. Rogers :

Wear it awhile, against him led,  
With your own blood you'll dye it red.  
But had your brave forefathers worn it,  
Great Nassau from their brows had torn it.—V.H.

[\* It is a moot point whether divine right can be said to date back in practice to the Wars of the Roses; though, in theory, Sir Robert Filmer (1604—1653), a writer well known for his extreme opinions on this subject, held that the doctrine commenced with the creation of man.]

sacred rights of which it was an emblem and by the recollection of numberless victories in which it had been worn. In the same spirit, the restored Prince assumed the title of Louis the *Eighteenth*, thereby proclaiming himself heir to the rights which the nation had neglected or denied, and not merely of those they had instituted and acknowledged. He contrived to evade, or to alter even, the conditions of his recall. The Emperor of Russia himself affected to lament the adherence of the restored dynasty to ancient and exploded notions, and a remark of Prince Talleyrand's on the Royalists was much repeated, namely, that they had *forgotten* nothing and *learnt* nothing during their emigration.<sup>1</sup>

Peace was signed at Paris on May 30, 1814. The Confederates, with a view of reconciling the French to the counter-revolution, either generously or foolishly abstained from imposing such conditions on the House of Bourbon as the respective situation of their forces would have enabled and entitled them to exact from France. Lord Castlereagh neglected to insist on the general, immediate, and final abolition of the Slave Trade.<sup>2</sup> The Saints,<sup>3</sup> and indeed the public in England, were deeply disappointed at this omission, which,

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon inserted this just remark afterwards in one of his proclamations, and felt perhaps a malicious pleasure in using the sarcasm of Talleyrand against that party to whom he had contributed to betray him.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [The Slave Trade was the subject of a special clause in the Treaty, which, however, did not go as far as the enthusiasts on the subject had hoped. The French King engaged himself to combine with the King of England, at a future Congress, for general abolition; and in the meanwhile consented that the trade should cease in French possessions within five years. Lord Liverpool even offered, at the Congress of Vennia, to cede the Island of Trinidad as compensation for the French colonists who believed they would be utterly ruined by an immediate cessation of the trade.]

<sup>3</sup> [Wilberforce and his party.]

whether oversight or design, betrayed indifference in the cause. It was, at least, no matter of surprise to those who reflected that the English Ministry was exclusively composed of men who, during the long controversy on that subject, had uniformly signalised themselves as the enemies of the abolition, and represented the zeal in its favour as the enthusiasm of visionaries or the pretences of designing hypocrites.

Lord Wellington had the bad taste to accept of the Embassy to Paris—a station which he filled with less credit to himself than any to which his fortune had called him.

The Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia visited England early in June. The Emperor of Austria had been expected, but pleaded business or health as an excuse. If his object was to ingratiate himself with the Prince Regent, he did not act injudiciously in absenting himself. The King of Prussia attracted little notice, either in society or among the populace. He appeared what he was—a plain soldier and mere corporal, and he was overshadowed by his own dragoon, General Blucher, whose coarse and jovial manners, the result of vulgar ignorance and military good-humour, together with his veteran appearance, rendered him a prodigious favourite with the multitude. Alexander very reasonably excited more curiosity and interest. His extensive empire, his inordinate and uncontrolled power, his age, and even his personal qualities, which, though not extraordinary, were far superior to those of his brother Sovereigns, his recent popularity at Paris, and a thousand other circumstances, made him an object of attention to all who affected or felt any concern in the events of the political world. Moreover, he lay out for popularity; he acted his part decently in



society and very well in public. A monarch younger than himself, thus caressing and caressed by an English crowd, afforded no gratification to the Prince Regent; and he could not but be nettled at a foreign Prince, manifestly observant of such matters, becoming a witness to his personal unpopularity in the streets and to the liberties taken both with his Administration and his family in Parliament.

From contrivance or from accident a conversation arose in the Commons on subjects connected with the Princess of Wales on the very day the Sovereigns visited that House.<sup>1</sup> It was as notorious as it was strange that while the cannon were actually announcing the signature of peace by victorious generals in the capital of the enemy, the Prince Regent was pursued in his passage from Carlton to Buckingham House by the hisses and execrations of the people! These were not agreeable scenes to be exhibited to such foreign spectators.

It is true that when the Sovereigns accompanied His Royal Highness into the city no such marks of displeasure escaped from the throngs who pressed upon them, but even then the populace were at some pains to make it manifest that affection for their own Prince had no share in reconciling them to the cavalcade or assemblage of Monarchs, which they applauded. It was obvious that Alexander remarked these appearances: it was, moreover,

<sup>1</sup> I think, on reflection, the King of Prussia only was there that day.—V.H.

[Creevey says of this, in a letter dated June 21 (*Creevey Papers*, vol. i. p. 197): "I hope you admired our little brush last night in the presence of all the foreign grandees except the Emperor."

(The Opposition, knowing that the distinguished visitors were present, moved a resolution concerning the marriage of Princess Charlotte to the Hereditary Prince of Orange.)]

whispered at Court that he and his sister, the Duchess of Oldenburg, had been busy in estranging the mind of the Princess Charlotte from a marriage with Henry, the Prince of Orange,<sup>1</sup> then in contemplation. It is certain that a matrimonial alliance took place soon afterwards between that Prince and an Arch-duchess of Russia. The apprehension of having been outwitted in a political intrigue by the two Russian visitors exasperated the Prince Regent not a little, and all these considerations produced in his mind a strong personal dislike to the Emperor Alexander. It was shrewdly suspected that the scheme of marriage, thus frustrated by the Russians, had been entertained by the Court of Carlton House, with the double view of removing from the eyes of the public the object of their growing idolatry and from the Princess of Wales the only person in whose society she could find any resource and from whose affections she could derive any support. On the other hand, it is just to add that the advisers of the Prince Regent have maintained that his principal motive in pressing an immediate marriage, and possibly in preferring one which would lead to occasional absences from England, was a knowledge and dread of the singular impropriety, both of conduct and conversation, of her mother, and a well-grounded suspicion of

<sup>1</sup> [William, Prince of Orange (1792—1849), son of William I. of Holland. He was educated in England by Dr. Howley, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, and succeeded to the throne of Holland after his father's abdication in 1840. Huish, in his *Memoirs of George IV.* (vol. ii. p. 184), gives the translation of a passage in a German book, published at Leipsic, entitled, *The History of the Most Extraordinary Events of the European Courts in the Years 1813—1815.* This entirely bears out Lord Holland's statement; though, conversely, the book may be the source of his information. The Duchess of Oldenburg is mentioned as having been specially sent over to intrigue against the marriage.]

a systematic design in that quarter of involving Princess Charlotte in imprudent, if not criminal, intercourse with young officers and men of gallantry and adventure.

Stories of that sort, well or ill authenticated, certainly formed an original part of the green bag of 1820;<sup>1</sup> and the readiness with which the Prince Regent and the old Queen acquiesced in, and even promoted, the subsequent marriage with Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, though not suggested by either of them,<sup>2</sup> is some presumptive proof that an early marriage, and not absence, was the object they had chiefly in view. The conduct of the young lady, if not indecorous, was at least intrepid enough. She showed strong dispositions to continue the habit of the Brunswick family, and, had she lived, a disunion between the child and the parent would in all probability have been as prominent a feature in the reign of George IV. as it had been in those of his three predecessors. She peremptorily declined marriage with the Prince of Orange, and in her letter to him contrived to assign the two motives most unpalatable to her father, *viz.*, a repugnance to any residence abroad and a strong affection for her mother. The letter was as follows:

WARWICK HOUSE, 16 *June*, 1814.

After reconsidering, according to your wishes, the conversation that passed between us this morning, I am still of opinion the duties and affections that naturally bind us to our own respective countries render our marriage incompatible, not only from

<sup>1</sup> [The bag containing the documents and papers representing the case against Queen Caroline in 1820, which was laid on the table of the House of Lords.]

<sup>2</sup> With whom that scheme originated I cannot positively say; but the Duke and Duchess of York and Lord Anglesey had some hand in promoting it.—V.H.



motives of policy, but domestic happiness. From recent circumstances that have occurred I am fully convinced that my interest is naturally connected with that of my mother, and that my residence out of this Kingdom would be equally prejudicial to her interests and my own; as I can never forget the maternal claims she has upon my duty and attachment. I am equally aware of the claims your country has upon you. It was this consideration, added to the desire I had of complying with your wishes, which induced me some time ago to agree to accompany you to Holland, if I obtained satisfactory security of having it in my power to return. Since that time the many unforeseen events that have occurred, particularly those regarding the Princess,<sup>1</sup> make me feel it impossible to quit England at present, or to enter into any engagement leading to it at a future time.

After what has passed this morning between us (which was much too conclusive to require explanation), I must consider our engagement from this moment to be *totally and for ever at an end*. I leave the explanation of this affair to be made by you to the Prince in whatever manner is most agreeable to you, trusting it entirely to your honour (of which for a moment I never doubted). I cannot conclude without expressing the sincere concern I feel in being the cause of giving you pain; which feeling, however, is lessened in a degree by the hope I stand acquitted in your eyes of having acted dishonourably by you in the course of this business, or of having ever raised false hopes in your mind with respect to my consenting to a residence abroad. You must recollect that in a letter from me to yours of May 3, that I told you that it was impossible for me to give any promise on that subject, as it must totally depend on circumstances.

It only now remains for me to entreat you to accept my sincerest and best wishes for your happiness, and to express the friendship and interest I shall always feel towards you.

(Signed) CHARLOTTE.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Wales.—V.H.

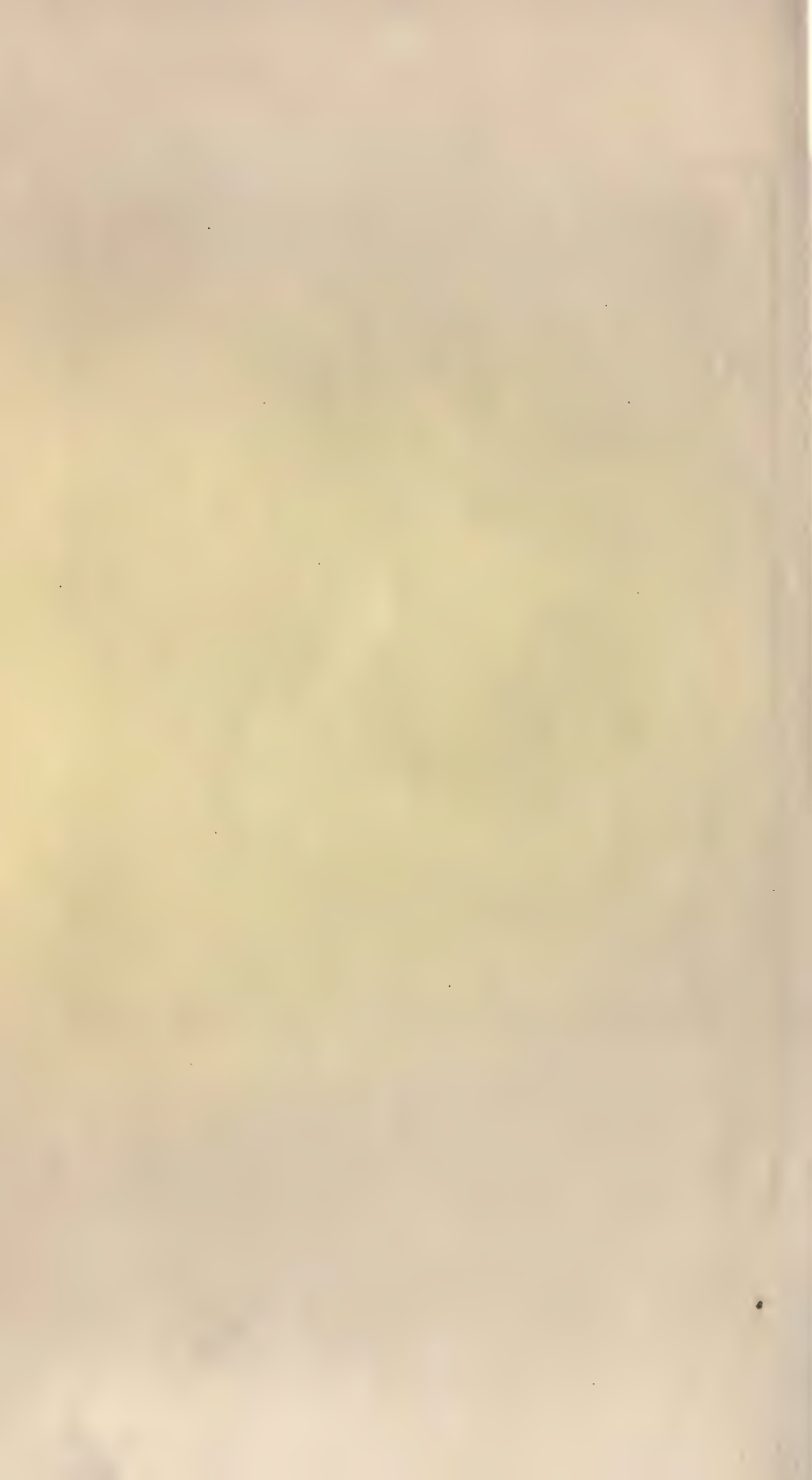
<sup>2</sup> Lady Jersey gave me the copy of this letter.—V.H.



THE PRINCESS OF WALES

By Sir J. H. W. L. S.

*Princess Charlotte*





The selection of topics in the above letter was unquestionably as offensive as it could be to the Prince Regent. The unforeseen events regarding the Princess of Wales were: her late exclusion from Court, her husband's declaration that he would never meet her, her appeal to Parliament in a letter to the Speaker, and the discussions that arose thereupon.<sup>1</sup> The Prince was exceedingly irritated, and, after various altercations with his daughter, in which according to her account many menaces were resorted to, exasperated or alarmed her so much that she suddenly eloped on July 12, and conveyed herself in a hackney coach to her mother's house in Connaught Place. She did so *certainly* without legal advice, and I have been always assured without any concert with the Princess of Wales, who, after consulting Mr. Brougham and the Duke of Sussex, persuaded her to return.<sup>2</sup> The only use that Princess Charlotte made of her strange and indecorous *escapade*,

<sup>1</sup> [The usual scandal was raked up this year by the fact of two Drawing-rooms taking place, which were held by the Queen in honour of the Royal visitors. The Princess signified her intention of being present, but received a notice from the Queen that it was impossible to give her leave to do so, owing to the declaration of the Prince Regent that he would not meet his wife on any occasion either public or private.]

<sup>2</sup> [An interesting account of the Princess's flight is given in *Leaves from the Diary of Henry Greville*. His authority is Madame de Flauhault, who was actually at Warwick House at the time. The Princess was much perturbed at the news of the Regent's immediate arrival, but the first intimation of her departure was ten minutes later, when Madame de Flauhault, while changing her gown, heard a workman in the street exclaim, "Why, surely, that's the Princess running down the street." The Regent, on his arrival, was furious at her disappearance, and sent Madame de Flauhault and the Bishop of Salisbury in search of the fugitive. They found her at Connaught Place; but her mother only arrived later from Blackheath, in response to an urgent message from her daughter. Madame de Flauhault stated that the Princess's return was mainly due to the advice of the Duke of York.]

was to record a solemn declaration *while she was at liberty*, that she had herself, of her own free will, broken off the match with the Prince of Orange, and that it should never take place.

Soon after these transactions, or rather while they were passing, I left England, and spent the remainder of the year 1814 abroad. I consequently know little or nothing that occurred in this country from that time till the renewal of war in 1815 that is not to be found in newspapers, Parliamentary reports, and *Annual Registers*.

## INTRODUCTION TO BOOK THE FOURTH

THE Treaty of Paris in 1814 had materially assisted to restore Europe to its condition of a quarter of a century before ; but the new spirit of republicanism, inspired by the doctrines of the French Revolution, had in most cases forced upon the restored Sovereigns a growing regard for the comfort and welfare of their subjects.

Spain was an unfortunate exception of this happy state of affairs. Ferdinand, at best little more than a buffoon, celebrated his return to power by renouncing the Constitution of 1812 and persecuting its chief supporters. The Spaniards, blind to everything but their veneration of the name of Monarchy, gave him their entire confidence. This unfortunately was completely misplaced ; the state of the people became as it was in the worst period of Charles IV.'s reign, and the country again became a prey to the rapacity of favourites and the extortions of an unscrupulous clergy.

The re-establishment of the Bourbons in France commenced more peacefully, but rumours of serious disaffection were soon rife in Paris. Louis XVIII. had granted a charter on his return, framed on very liberal and enlightened lines, but his weakness in



pandering to the emigrants and the clergy created much disaffection, especially in the army.

The Congress held at Vienna had many difficulties with which to contend; and the meetings barely escaped an abrupt termination. A secret combination of England, France, and Austria was formed to resist the designs of Russia and Prussia on Poland and Saxony; but fortunately matters were successfully arranged, and before the chance for further dissension could arise, complete unanimity was restored by the news of the escape of Napoleon from Elba. The deposed Emperor, who had received information of the fact that the people of France were not satisfied with their present rulers, landed near Cannes on February 26, and advanced north. The country rallied to him as one man, and within a month he entered Paris. Any hopes, however, that he may have had of a peaceful retention of France were soon dispelled. The Allied Sovereigns at once renewed their pledges of combined action; Napoleon was proclaimed an outlaw, and steps were concerted to cope with the common danger. Murat took up arms in Italy to assist his former master, but was easily overthrown by the Austrians, and his forces dispersed. Napoleon, preferring to fight outside the borders of France, advanced into Belgium at the head of 129,000 men. The campaign, which lasted less than a week, terminated at Waterloo. Napoleon fled first to Paris, and afterwards to Rochefort, whence he hoped to escape to the United States accompanied by a few

faithful adherents. He was, however, unable to carry out his design, and in despair went on board an English man-of-war, throwing himself on the mercy of the Prince Regent. The British Government, determined on this occasion to choose some spot whence there could be no possibility of return, fixed on St. Helena, and Napoleon ended his days there in 1821.

Louis XVIII. was restored to the throne on the re-occupation of Paris by the Allies. The second Treaty of Paris was signed in November, after much discussion as to the terms to be imposed. By the most important clauses, France was to pay indemnities amounting to about £40,000,000, and to defray the cost of an occupation of the northern provinces by an Allied force of 150,000 men for five years. In the meanwhile, the members of the Congress of Vienna had continued and terminated their endeavours to effect a lasting settlement of Europe. The kingdom of Poland was included in the dominions of the Czar; half Saxony and the Duchy of Warsaw were joined to Prussia; the smaller German states were federated; and other international questions, such as the Abolition of the Slave Trade, received serious attention.

The restoration of the Bourbons was the signal for a political reaction throughout France, which in parts of the country developed tendencies reminiscent of the Revolution. Royalist outbreaks took place in the south on the receipt of the news of Napoleon's overthrow, and continued with violence until forcibly

repressed with the assistance of the army of occupation. The election of the Chamber, which took place in August, 1815, resulted in a complete victory for the Ultra-Royalists, to the almost entire exclusion of the Liberal and Republican parties. Fouché and Talleyrand were dismissed, and a new Ministry was formed under the Duc de Richelieu, which at once took in hand the prosecution of those men excepted by name from the Acts of Amnesty. Most of them had been sensible enough to leave the country, but some had remained, and of these Ney and Labedoyère paid the penalty for their temerity. The policy of the new Ministry, whose hands were forced by the violence of their supporters, became more and more advanced, and within two years the *rôles* of the two parties seemed reversed, the *Ultras* attempting to weaken the Royal power, and the Liberals to support the monarchy. The allied forces, under the supreme command of Wellington, continued their occupation of the French territories until 1818, when they were withdrawn.

The final termination of a war which had increased the English National Debt by over £550,000,000, raised hopes in the breasts of the people of England, which unfortunately proved to be fallacious. The nation expected that an alleviation of the grievous burden of taxation from which it had been suffering would be accompanied by a revival of trade. The year 1815 certainly seemed to foretell happier times, but the following year witnessed a reaction which



plunged the poorer portion of the population in the direst distress. The propertied and influential classes, terrified at the excesses of the French Revolution, strained every nerve to discount all popular movements. A Corn Law, passed in 1815, forbidding the importation of corn until the price reached 80s. a quarter, as well as the repeal of the Property Tax, increased the destitution of the agricultural labourers and dwellers in the manufacturing towns. The discontent and agitation were encouraged by William Cobbett's paper, *The Weekly Register*, which advocated universal suffrage and annual parliaments. The Regent, on his return from the House of Lords in 1816, was assailed by stones, while riots and seditious meetings were common throughout the country. Lord Sidmouth, the Home Secretary, covering the weakness of Government with a specious appearance of power, carried the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and originated other arbitrary forms of repression. These, however, were insufficient to quell the disturbances. Meetings were held in all parts of England, and the celebrated riot near Manchester in 1819, known as the "Massacre of Peterloo," raised a storm of protests against the stringent enactments carried by Lord Liverpool's Administration. The laws, however, in restraint of sedition, termed "The Six Acts," which were passed during the same year, had their effect; and a revival of trade in 1820 caused a momentary lull in the radical campaign for reform.

Many deaths occurred in the Royal Family during 1817 and the three succeeding years. In 1817 Princess Charlotte, the Prince Regent's only child, who had married Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg during the preceding year, died in childbirth; and a year later occurred the death of Queen Charlotte. Early in January, 1820, the Duke of Kent died, leaving an only daughter, destined to succeed to the throne as Queen Victoria; and before the end of the month George III. terminated his miserable and sorely afflicted existence.

The accession of the Prince Regent again brought into public notice the unhappy dissensions between him and his wife. He entirely refused to allow her name to be inserted in the Prayer Book; and on her return to England to assert her rights as Queen Consort, he compelled the Government to bring the matter forward in Parliament. Lord Liverpool, realising that the measure would increase George IV.'s unpopularity with his subjects, implored him to be content with moderate counsels; but the King, firm in his resolve, refused to be satisfied with anything less than a divorce. Queen Caroline's arrival in London was little less than a triumphal procession, and demonstrated clearly the sympathy of the country with her cause. After a secret Committee had reported on the case, a bill was brought forward against her in the House of Lords, in the summer of 1820, but was dropped for good and all in October, when the Government

majority, on the third reading, dwindled to nine. The unhappy lady did not long survive, for she died of internal inflammation early in August, 1821, after a fruitless attempt, not three weeks before, to take her place at her husband's Coronation.

The five years which succeeded the termination of the war on the Continent passed without any striking incident; but in 1820 movements were set on foot in several of the Mediterranean States, notably Spain, Italy, and Greece, to obtain more liberal forms of government. In Spain the restoration of the Constitution of 1812, withdrawn by the arbitrary decree of Ferdinand VII. in 1814, was successfully demanded, and the movement spread with like results to Portugal.

The insurgents at Naples were not equally fortunate in their attempts to diminish the tyrannical powers of their King, Ferdinand IV. The question was discussed by a Congress of European Sovereigns at Laybach, who decided that Ferdinand should be allowed to retain his arbitrary powers uncurtailed, and that an Austrian army should be sent to enforce their resolution. Great Britain took no part in this despotic action of the Powers; and the exemption of Spain from external interference was chiefly due to a protest from the English Government against the right of the Allied Powers to intervene in the internal affairs and government of other States.



## BOOK THE FOURTH

1815—1821

N.B.—This book contains notes for Memoirs from the summer of 1815 [to the autumn of 1821].

It was not begun till 1830, and *many* of the facts are from memory, unassisted by notes taken at the time, though refreshed generally by reference to some correspondence or document.—V.H.

WHEN I transcribed my notes for Memoirs in 1825, I meant that they should end at the close of the year 1814. I proposed to confine all my future labours of the kind to the completion of two supplementary chapters already begun, one of which related to foreign characters and events, and is now brought down to the year 1815,<sup>1</sup> and the other,<sup>2</sup> still in hand, relates to such as having fallen within my observation either in England or elsewhere before 1815, seem to me, albeit unconnected with politics, not destitute of interest.

It is not necessary to account, much less to apologise, for having at one time abandoned a task which I had voluntarily imposed upon myself. It may with more reason be expected that I should explain my motives in resuming it now. The truth is, that the third expulsion of the Bourbons from France in July, 1830, has in some little degree revived in my breast the

<sup>1</sup> [Published under the name of *Foreign Reminiscences*, by Henry Edward, Lord Holland, in 1852.]

<sup>2</sup> [Termed *Miscellaneous Reminiscences*. See p. 307.]

spirits and hopes which animated me at an earlier period of life :

*Agnosco veteris vestigia flammæ.*

Moreover, the accession of King William, to whom my son<sup>1</sup> is attached both by connection and gratitude, makes it possible that I may be privy to the secret causes of public and party transactions, although neither my age, position, nor inclinations render it likely that I either can or shall take a more active part in them than I have done for fifteen years past.<sup>2</sup> Of the events of these fifteen years my report must be rapid and imperfect. I have taken little share in party councils during that period, and have preserved few memorials of the events, especially of the first five.

I returned to England in the summer of 1815—the day, I believe, that the Emperor Napoleon was brought to our shores in a British man-of-war, and after the second restoration of the Bourbons had been virtually effected. To both those restorations it is strange but true that the personal character and predilections of George IV. had mainly contributed. On the first occasion, without the knowledge of Lord Castlereagh and the Ministers, he connived at, if he did not contrive, the arrival of the Bourbon Princes at Bordeaux and other places in France, and during the negotiations

<sup>1</sup> [General Charles Richard Fox, who married, in 1824, Lady Mary FitzClarence, second daughter of William IV. and Mrs. Jordan.]

<sup>2</sup> How shortsighted are predictions! In three months or less after writing this, I was invited by Lord Grey to a seat in the Cabinet, and though, from considerations of health, I declined any more active employment, I accepted the seals of the Duchy of Lancaster, an office which brings me in constant and private intercourse with the King, and which, under so direct and honourable a Prince as William IV., is a pleasant and easy, as well as an honourable, occupation.—V.H.

at Chatillon he resorted to many underhand manœuvres to prevent any termination of them which did not include the restoration of the pretended legitimate dynasty.

To the presence, intrigues, and misrepresentations of the almost forgotten faction of the Bourbons, as well as to a variety of mistakes and accidents elsewhere recounted,<sup>1</sup> the result of the Emperor of Russia's arrival at Paris in 1814 is mainly to be attributed. Austria was averse, Russia was indifferent to, the restoration of the Bourbons, and Prussia was exclusively bent on vengeance and aggrandisement; and the Regent of England was almost the only man in his own councils, as well as the only Prince in the Confederacy, really desirous of accomplishing that object. It is not perhaps equally known, but it is equally true, that there was, in 1815, equal and greater indifference in the Allied Powers, amounting to an unwillingness to confer on Louis XVIII. all the advantages which the prodigious efforts of Europe had wrested from his antagonist. The experiences of one year have given them an insight into the personal character of the restored Princes, and still more of the ungrateful and unreasonable faction which accompanied them. This would have led Austria, Russia, and Prussia to acquiesce in any arrangement cheerfully which afforded a prospect of preserving peace, even though it had altered what is miscalled the legitimate succession of the Monarchy.

<sup>1</sup> [See *ante*, p. 188. The statement, however, that Alexander would have been otherwise unable to reach Paris seems an extreme view of the case. The Allies had won their way to the capital by force of arms, and whatever decision had been arrived at with regard to the future government of France, they would have been obliged to occupy the city. The failure of the Congress of Chatillon was primarily due, not to the intrigues of the Bourbons, but to the unwillingness of Napoleon to seize the opportunity of making peace.]



The Prince Regent and Duke of Wellington exploded all such notions. They treated the restoration of Louis XVIII. as an indispensable part of the arrangement. The Duke of Wellington asked Louis if he preferred being placed on his throne by Frenchmen or by foreigners. He answered, "Decidedly by Frenchmen." "Then," replied Wellington, "there is but one method and one man: you must employ Fouché."<sup>1</sup> Reluctantly, and with a bad grace, Louis consented. Fouché became Minister. But ere long Fouché and the base, runaway emigrants whom he restored affected to be so national that they treated the foreigners, and even the Duke of Wellington himself, with indignity. The courtiers and the King himself turned their backs upon him in so marked a way that the Duke resented it, and did not return to the Tuileries till Monsieur (Charles X.) conveyed an apology to him.<sup>2</sup> He wrote an account of this transaction home. The letter was among those confided to and printed by Gurwood (from whom I had the relation), but suppressed in the publication.

During my absence from England in 1815, many changes had occurred in the aspect of the party with whom I had uniformly acted. Mr. Whitbread, who had for many years much influence, good and bad, on its fortunes, had recently put a violent

<sup>1</sup> [Fouché was made Minister of Police in 1800, and later Minister of the Interior. By siding with all parties of the State as suited the moment, he continued in power at intervals under both Empire and Monarchy, until finally exiled as one of the instigators of the death of Louis XVI.]

This advice from the Duke is corroborated by a letter published by Sir Herbert Maxwell in his *Life of Wellington*, vol. ii. p. 100.]

<sup>2</sup> [Sir Herbert Maxwell relates that Louis noticed the rudeness of Napoleon's generals who had become Royalists, and mentioned it to the Duke. His only answer was, "Sire, ils sont si accoutumés à me tourner le dos, qu'ils n'en ont encore perdu l'habitude."]

termination to his ever-active but useful existence.<sup>1</sup> That lamentable event, as well as many of his defects, might be traced to a restless impatience of contradiction, which, resulting perhaps from physical causes, was unaccountably blended in his very singular character with the earnest affection for individuals and the most unquestionable benevolence towards mankind. Too honourable and too conscientious to do what he thought wrong, he had, nevertheless, such an appetite for applause, and had been so pampered with it by dependants and sycophants, that when he foresaw it was about to cease or to be converted by many who had administered it into censure and resistance, he mistook their discontent with him for self-reproach, and he could not endure it.

Such was the real history of his suicide. He had extraordinary readiness and indefatigable application in business, a warm heart, great decision of character, and a good understanding. Though not without some imagination, he was lamentably deficient in taste; yet by dint of earnestness, assiduity, and practice he had made himself little less than an orator and certainly a very able speaker in Parliament. Vanity often made him impracticable. Flatterers and dependants engrossed his society, and not unfrequently perverted his manners and judgment. His death, though a great loss to the public, and yet more to his neighbourhood

<sup>1</sup> Lord Ossory, in his commonplace, recording the circumstances of his death, thus characterises his neighbour :

"July 6, 1815, was the melancholy termination of the active and useful (in many respects) life of poor Whitbread. He was a most indefatigable man, of eminent talents and many virtues. He had a great irritability of temper, which at last, combined with a natural fulness of blood in the head, produced the fatal catastrophe. Contradiction made him become a vehement advocate for Bonaparte. Bedfordshire used to be called Whitbreadshire, but I deny that he ever governed or ruled me."—V.H.

and country, was more likely to heal than exasperate any dissension in Opposition, for he loved to mark distinctions favourable to his own popularity, and was, moreover, personally obnoxious to the Grenvilles.

But there were other alterations in the state of the party. Our leaders had espoused very opposite principles on one great branch of commercial policy which was brought into agitation in 1814 and 1815. Lauderdale had been the secret instigator, and was the open champion, of the restrictive Corn Law<sup>1</sup> which Ministers had adopted. Grey's real opinion, fortified and perhaps inculcated by Lauderdale, leant towards any measure that kept up the price of that article, and prevented any sudden reduction of rents. Lord Grenville and Mr. Horner were decidedly friends to a free trade; and the authority and sound philosophy of such men, coinciding with the natural prejudices of the populace and the mischievous clamour of some seditious writers, constituted a formidable opposition to a very questionable, as well as unpopular, policy. Lord Grey, after hesitating between his own and Lauderdale's opinion on one side, and a desire of harassing the Ministry under the sanction of Lord Grenville on the other, pressed for a postponement of the question, and steered a course deeply resented by Lauderdale, not quite agreeable to either party, nor perhaps entirely creditable to himself.<sup>2</sup> He and Lord Grenville had differed yet more openly on the war, the latter reverting to his anti-Jacobin prejudices,

<sup>1</sup> [Mr. Robinson's bill permitting importation when wheat touched 80s. a quarter.]

<sup>2</sup> [Lord Grey's motion was as follows: "To institute a further inquiry relative to the state of the growth, commerce, and consumption of grain, and the state of the laws relating thereto." He was supported by Lord Grenville and others; but the majority of the House was opposed to the motion, which was defeated by 124 votes to 18.]



and Grey maintaining nobly and ably the wisdom and justice of not interfering. But the war was terminated by the victory of Waterloo, the occupation of Paris, the forced restoration of Louis XVIII., and the mass of treaties negotiated by the Prince Regent, Duke of Wellington, and Lord Castlereagh, and vainly denominated by them the final settlement of Europe. That immediate cause of difference was therefore extinct. Yet there remained, in truth, between the Foxite and Grenville branches of Whigs no real bond of union but a concurrence of opinion on the subject of Roman Catholics and Ireland, and the recollection of mutual kindnesses and services during a political connection of ten years.

The latter feeling was, I believe, strong in Lord Grenville's honourable mind, notwithstanding some tenacity of opinion for which his family has always been remarkable, and from which he is not entirely exempt. It could not be stronger in his mind than it was in mine, but I am aware that many Whigs, and among them persons of importance who differed with him less, felt very soon afterwards much more inclination to separate from him than myself.

Lord Grey did not come up to the meeting of Parliament in 1816. The treaties<sup>1</sup> were discussed in his absence; but Lord Grenville was so little disposed to court the Government that he arraigned without scruple or reserve every fault of omission or commission he could find in the treaty, and proposed an amendment which, while it lamented the power and territory left to France, dwelt yet more emphatically on the impolicy and danger of keeping a foreign force in that kingdom, and deprecated the

<sup>1</sup> [Concluded with foreign Powers, and dealing with the settlement of France.]

necessity created by that measure of maintaining vast standing armies during peace. For that amendment, which he had accommodated as far as he could to my views, I voted. I signed, in common with eleven peers, a dissentient to its rejection. I moved no amendment of my own, but having said *not content* without directing the House to the original address, I embodied in a short protest of my own the main objections to the treaty, namely, that it imposed the Bourbons on France, and sanctioned the principle of guaranteeing hereditary monarchies against the people, for whom and from whom they should alone derive their authority.

Many of the transactions at Paris, as well as the ungenerous treatment of Napoleon, were objectionable on principle and disgusting to the feelings of all who had a nature capable of justice or humanity to a fallen foe. Substantially, if not technically, the merit or guilt of such acts rests with the Prince Regent and the Duke of Wellington. If the removal of the works of art,<sup>1</sup> the demolition of sundry monuments, and other severe retributions of the kind were after the capitulation irregular and questionable; if the judicial murders of Labedoyère and Marshal Ney were direct violations of the articles of that capitulation; and if the detention and transportation of a dethroned and abdicated monarch by a foreign Power be a breach of the Law of Nations, as well as an unusual and harsh exercise of power, they will all be more or less stains on the character of the great General

<sup>1</sup> Many of them had been ceded by treaty to France, and either some other article in that treaty or the peace itself which it established had been in reason and public law an equivalent stipulation in favour of the party who ceded them. They were resumed or rather taken by force from the French, after a capitulation or treaty in which there was no stipulation whatever for their restoration.—V.H.

of the Confederacy, as well as on the Governments who sanctioned and the Ministerial agents who counselled or perpetrated such acts of violence or bad faith.

The Duke of Wellington did not, indeed, instigate, possibly he did not approve of, these public crimes, nor was he the official instrument in committing them.<sup>1</sup> Nothing perhaps but a weak reluctance to give advice unpleasant to Royalty restrained him from remonstrating against some of those acts. He must even then have been aware that they would tarnish the lustre of his achievements. He had, indeed, the bad taste on that and many subsequent occasions to speak loudly in disparagement of Frenchmen,<sup>2</sup> but bigotry or fanaticism in a cause he is much too sensible to feel, and personal resentment to Ney or Napoleon he could have none. He is said to have censured in private the appointment of Sir Hudson Lowe to St. Helena, foreseeing from his knowledge of the character of that gaoler that his usage of the illustrious prisoner would be neither humane nor decorous.<sup>3</sup> Such regret, if expressed, was never conveyed to the quarters where it might have rectified the mistake and alleviated the sufferings of the prisoner. Wellington preferred the odium of abetting the oppression of a great man to the

<sup>1</sup> [It is only fair to the Duke to state that from other contemporary records he seems to have endeavoured to restrain the Allies from overdue harshness in their treatment of Paris. The preservation of the *Pont de Jéna* from the destructive intentions of Blucher was chiefly owing to his representations.]

<sup>2</sup> He indulged in vulgar abuse of those he had conquered and in sundry other bad habits so much, when Ambassador in 1814, that the punster at Paris called him, "My Lord *Vilain ton*."—V.H.

<sup>3</sup> [The Duke certainly had no high opinion of Lowe. Compare a conversation of the Duke and Mr. Creevey on this subject, *Creevey Papers*, vol. i. 289.]



hazard of losing Royal favour or incurring the resentment of official pride, by an act of humanity and generosity. He must abide by the consequences. History, if she does not brand him as an accessory in the guilt, will describe him in this instance as deficient in that magnanimity which is incapable of it, and which has been so justly extolled in our Black Prince. That great General, in circumstances not totally dissimilar, respected, soothed, and interceded for a fallen competitor or dethroned usurper,<sup>1</sup> whom the chances of war had placed at his disposal. With whom the cruel expedient of exiling Napoleon originated I do not know. I have reasons to believe that such a destination for him had been contemplated before he left the Isle of Elba.<sup>2</sup> When I, in private, upbraided Lord Liverpool with an act of harshness, so little of a piece with his general character and policy, he defended himself by the extreme difficulty of knowing what to do with such a prisoner.

The Prince Regent subsequently showed himself so full of rancour to the very memory of a man who had eclipsed the glory and assumed, with some of the vices, all the functions of Royalty, without having been born or bred to any such pernicious office, that

<sup>1</sup> At least, so the Black Prince and the English termed him. The French did not, nor did they so consider Napoleon, whom they had chosen Consul and Emperor.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [Lord Holland says in his *Foreign Reminiscences* (p. 194) that this question was actually discussed at the Congress of Vienna. He mentions that his authority was an Englishman of veracity, employed at the Congress, who told it him before the Battle of Waterloo.

Talleyrand must certainly have raised the point at the Congress, as his instructions were to make strenuous efforts to obtain the removal of Napoleon from an island in such close proximity to the shores of France. The Azores or St. Helena were considered more suitable for insuring the safety of Europe.]

the suspicion of posterity will fall chiefly upon him. Yet his first feeling, or at least his first exclamation, on receiving the famous letter, by no means bespoke the hatred he afterwards displayed to the writer! He is reported to have said, after glancing his eye over its contents, "Upon my word, a very proper letter: much more so, I must say, than any I ever received from Louis XVIII." This commendation was extorted neither by the strange singularity of Napoleon's fate, by the striking and pathetic selection of the topics, the apt allusion to Themistocles, or the short and emphatic style of the epistle, but by the title "Altesse" with which it commenced, and which for some reason or another, to me unknown, our Regent considered as more respectful and more appropriate to the station he then held than "Monseigneur." But though struck with such profound display of knowledge in etiquette, as none, he deemed, but *porphyrogeniti* and Germans could possess, it did not soften him, or, if it did, the compassion it excited was very transient indeed. He grudged even the asylum our laws afforded to the persecuted adherents of the fallen Emperor. He was cross at the attentions shown by fashionable society in London to Flahault<sup>1</sup> and other young men of the late Imperial Court, and he was bitterly incensed against me because the Duke of Sussex signed a dissentient to the bill for the detention of Napoleon Bonaparte.

The importance he attached to that incident, and the soreness expressed about it many years after-

<sup>1</sup> [Count Auguste Charles Joseph Flahault, Napoleon's aide-de camp in the Russian campaign and at the battle of Waterloo. His name was removed by the influence of Talleyrand from the list of proscriptions, but he remained in England some years, and married Margaret, Baroness Keith and Nairne. He became French Ambassador in London in 1860, and died ten years later.

wards, are proofs, among many, of the very trifling, contracted, and personal view he took of all transactions, as well [as] of the inaccuracy of the reports with which his appetite for gossip was generally supplied. He imagined, or at least asserted, that both Lady Holland and myself had used very earnest persuasions to prevail on his brother Augustus to sign his name, whereas it so happened that from some little personal motives of vanity, and chiefly at the request of Lady Holland, I had taken considerable pains to conceal my entering the protest till it was too late for him or any other peer to add his name. He, however, availed himself, contrary to my wishes,<sup>1</sup> of the third reading to annex by reference his adherence to the opinion I had recorded.

The necessity of any bill implied the irregularity of the whole proceeding. It passed, however, with little debate in the Session of 1816. Our politicians had a feverish dread of incurring odium by a fruitless expression of sympathy for a man, so long the theme of popular execration in the country. Mr. Brougham most unnecessarily expressed some qualified approbation of the measure. I felt on that, as on some other occasions, the full value of our privilege of protesting. One has the consolation of recording one's principles, without inviting observation to the shades of difference subsisting between one's self and one's friends. I was, indeed, told that the step I was taking would be peculiarly

<sup>1</sup> I erase *without my knowledge*, for the words convey more than I mean and more than is strictly true. His Royal Highness did, after reproaching me for not showing him the protest before I had entered it, ask me if, consistently with the orders and usages of the House, he could sign it on the third reading. I, of course, told him that he could refer in a dissentient to the reasons of a protest on the same subject on the journals, and he took that course.—V.H.



offensive to the English public. To the Court it was so, no doubt : to the people, I believe, far the contrary. The dispassionate portion of the community would have been better pleased if a less distant exile and a milder fate had been reserved for their fallen enemy. Our people, on this, as on many other occasions, displayed more delicacy and generosity of sentiment than their representatives either gave them credit for or had the courage to exemplify in their own conduct.

The trial and execution of Marshal Ney and the papers relating to it, though laid before the House of Lords, on the motion of Lord St. John, attracted little notice and no debate in Parliament. It was apprehended by those who reprobated the proceeding, that an unsuccessful attempt to stigmatise it as a crime comparable to that of infamous memory which brought Jerome of Prague to the stake, might invite a vote of actual approbation and stamp permanently on the national character a stain which, as it is, only tarnishes the fame of a few individuals.<sup>1</sup> The thirst for revenge which manifestly actuated Louis XVIII. might perhaps be palliated, and at least was reasonably accounted for by a reference either to the Marshal's private professions to him and his subsequent violation of them, or to the King's habitual and unfeeling cruelty. But it is remarkable that the very letters of Lord Bathurst and the Duke of Wellington of July 7 and 15, 1815,<sup>2</sup> which were produced to justify the construction put upon the 12th article of the Capitulation by the victors, distinctly admit and show that a doubt of the meaning of that

<sup>1</sup> [It is interesting to find that Lady Holland writes to Mrs. Creevey on January 1, 1816: "There is a strong feeling getting up in the country at our permitting the Capitulation to be broken, altho' none are sorry Ney suffered."]

<sup>2</sup> [Printed in the *Annual Register* for 1816. State Papers, p. 378.]

article had occurred to the Prince Regent himself before he ratified the Convention.

It is equally clear from those letters that such doubt was removed from his mind by the explanation of the Duke of Wellington—that is, by the interpretation put upon it by one of the signing parties without any fresh communication with the other. It results from this simple statement of facts that, by the admission and almost in the judgment of that power to which an appeal was afterwards made to give the milder construction to the 12th article, the said article was ambiguous and susceptible of two interpretations. But another article of the same treaty, namely, the 15th, contains the following words: "If difficulties arise in the execution of *any one* of the articles of the present Convention, the interpretation of it shall be made in favour of the French Army and of the City of Paris." Difficulties did arise in the execution of the 12th article. The construction which the ratifying party apprehended was put upon it by one of the weaker party, and the benefit of the doubt under the 15th article was claimed by that party. Yet "the interpretation was not made in favour" of, but to the injury and murder of a Marshal of the Army, and an inhabitant of Paris!

I was, I own, deeply affected by the merits of this case at the time, not only from compassion for the sufferers, but from a sincere dread of the disgrace which would attach to the English General and to the English name, if so just a claim for our intercession were resisted. I ventured to write to Lord Kinnaird,<sup>1</sup> then living in intimacy with

<sup>1</sup> [Charles, eighth Lord Kinnaird, born in 1780; died in 1826. He married, in 1806, Lady Olivia Fitzgerald, daughter of the second Duke of Leinster, and Lord Holland's cousin.]

the Duke of Wellington, on the subject; and in the persuasion that my letter would arrive long before the irrevocable moment of his execution, I urged him to communicate my reasons and feelings to his powerful friend. The letter is as follows:

MIDDLETON, *Dec. 5, 1816.*

DEAR KINNAIRD,

What is passing at Paris annoys me more than I can well describe. For La Valette,<sup>1</sup> on the score of private acquaintance, though slight, I am much concerned; but, from the regard to the character of our country and to that of the Duke of Wellington (in whom, after the great things he has done, even as decided an opponent of the war as myself must feel some national interest), I have conceived more horror at the trials and executions going on in the teeth of our Capitulation than mere humanity could create.

How can such a man as Wellington assert that the impunity for political conduct extends only to impunity from the Allies for offences committed against them? When ships strike, when garrisons surrender, do the captains or commanders stipulate that the foreign conqueror shall not molest them for their political exertions? With or without such stipulations, what shadow of right has a foreign enemy to punish individuals for opinions held or conduct pursued in their own country? It is clear the impunity promised was impunity for crimes, real or supposed, against a French Government. If the French Government was a party to that promise, by that promise it must abide; if not, the other Allies are bound in honour not to deliver over a town taken in virtue of it without exacting the same terms from those to whom they deliver it. Such perhaps is the formal, technical way of putting the argument. Practically and substantially the case, if not more striking, is yet more conclusive to men of justice and honour. The Allies have virtually (I might say formally too)

<sup>1</sup> [Antoine Marie, Count de La Valette (1769—1833), aide-de-camp of Napoleon. He was condemned to death, but escaped to England, with the help of his wife assisted by Sir Robert Wilson and two other Englishmen.]



been masters of Paris, while the persons who delivered it to them, on the faith of impunity for political offences,<sup>1</sup> have for political offences been imprisoned, tried, condemned, and executed!

Wellington has himself precluded all doubt on the question. He maintains in his letter to Lord Castlereagh that there is no article in the Capitulation securing to the town of Paris the pictures and statues, and thereupon he argues; and he acts upon his argument that the Allies may seize the pictures, etc., etc., and seize them without any fresh or formal cession from Louis XVIII. Up to that time, then, the Allies, according to him, were in military possession of Paris; and up to that time therefore, even upon his own view of the subject, the inhabitants were entitled to claim impunity for all political opinions and conduct. Those who had the right and the power of taking forcibly from Paris property not specified or disposed of in the Capitulation, notwithstanding the nominal Government of Louis XVIII., must surely have a right to enforce on any such nominal and dependent Government the observance of promises on the faith of which the inhabitants had surrendered the town. Technical arguments may possibly be urged on both sides; and though they appear to me all in favour of Ney's claim, it is *not* on them I lay the stress, but on the obvious and practical aspect of the transaction as it must strike impartial men and posterity. The plain relation of the events in history will be this. A promise of security was held out to the inhabitants of Paris: they surrendered the town; and while Wellington and the Allies were still really in possession of it, Labedoyère was executed, and Ney was tried for political opinion and conduct. Even of subsequent executions, and I fear there will be many, it will be said, "The Allies delivered over their authority in Paris to a French Government, without exacting an observance of the stipulations on which they had originally acquired it."

Had we taken Martinique in '93 or '94 on a promise of not molesting individuals for political opinions or conduct, should we have been at liberty to cede it,

<sup>1</sup> [Neither Ney nor Labedoyère were present in Paris when the Capitulation was signed.]

had Louis XVIII. been then restored, without insisting on the impunity of all political offences, or, at the very least, on the right of leaving the country for such as might have so offended? In Egypt the French stipulated that no natives should be molested for their conduct or opinions during the war. We took military possession of the country on those terms, and then delivered it over to the political authority of the Ottoman Porte. When, however, the Captain Pacha, acting under that authority, began murdering the Beys and proceeding against the adherents of the French, we not only remonstrated and threatened, but actually protected the persecuted men within our lines. Yet by reference to the history of those times, you will find that many blamed Lord Hutchinson,<sup>1</sup> for not having recourse to yet more violent methods to enforce on the "legitimate political authority" the observance of engagements entered into by our military power on taking military possession of the country. Lord Nelson's conduct at Naples was indeed different: but what is the impression left of those transactions? Will Wellington condescend to accept the only palliation ever offered for Nelson, though a man in all other respects so justly beloved, *viz.*, blind, bigoted zeal and a very narrow capacity on every subject not connected with his own profession. What would Wellington himself have said, if the British troops had surrendered any town in Spain to the French with a similar stipulation, and if on the flimsy and hypocritical subterfuge of a distinction between Joseph's Spanish Government and the French military authorities, all the Spaniards who had assisted us during the siege had been prosecuted for treason against Joseph? Yet where is the distinction?

The worst is, that as nothing but Wellington's name could carry down so foul a transaction, so the whole odium of the breach of faith will fall on him and him only. He signed, he interpreted the Capitulation; *and when a construction of a doubtful passage might have saved one of the first officers of the age, he gave it the meaning least favourable to the con-*

<sup>1</sup> [Afterwards second Earl of Donoughmore. Commander-in-Chief in Egypt, 1801.]



*quered party, and left a man with whom he had once coped in the field of honourable war to be taken off by the hands of the executioner.*

The want of principle and consistency and the disgusting changes of the Marshals have, I know, steeled men's minds to their sufferings. This is natural enough. But when the violence of the times is gone by, and, above all, when the tomb has closed on their offences, the transaction will be judged with reference to the character of Wellington and to the nature of his promise, not to the conduct or misconduct of the sufferers.

*Si ego digna in quam faceres, tu tamen indignus qui feceris, Pamphile.*

Nor is this all. If we judge by former instances, even the crime itself will be regarded with more indulgence by posterity than any irregular mode of punishing it. Allowance for individuals is made in all great changes. It is difficult in sudden emergencies and great convulsions of State, especially for professional men whose lives have been passed in camps, to weigh maturely all the considerations by which their conduct should, in the strict line of duty, be regulated. Unforeseen cases occur, and men even of good principles and understanding are hurried into acts of inconsistency and political immorality. History is full of such instances, and in our own the name of one, with whom Wellington himself cannot dislike being associated, brings them to our recollection. Marlborough abandoned, in his King, a benefactor and protector, betrayed the person who placed great confidence in him, and did so when the opinions of his friends and party were, to say the least, divided, and not unanimous in favour of the step he took.

These men deserted a standard to which they were recently, reluctantly, and barely reconciled; under which they were regarded with suspicion by their Government, with hatred and reproach by their fellow soldiers, and they went over to their ancient companion in arms and victory—to one from whom they had derived rank, property, character, and importance. They did so, too, when all the military feeling of their country was decidedly in unison with the cause they espoused. A stoic,



a philosopher, a man whose public principles are stronger than his private affections, gratitude, or vanity, might perhaps have acted otherwise, and from strict regard to his honour, once given, have sacrificed his fortunes, his favour, and popularity with those to whom he was obliged, to support a cause in which he found himself engaged against his interests and inclinations. I own, however (you will perhaps reckon me lax for thinking so), that any military man who was to lay his hand on his heart and say that he would have done so, would give me a much higher opinion of his present prudence than of his self-knowledge and candour.

In this latter view of the subject, I know I am somewhat singular. Few at present make such allowances for the political tergiversations of the Marshals, and many, more indulgent than I am in their judgment of political apostasy in England, are quite outrageous with Frenchmen for not acting with inflexible principle in the most trying and difficult circumstances. Some, however, among the most indignant at their crimes, yet doubt the justice, policy, and safety of punishing them; and more, especially among the moderate of all parties, think the claim of the Capitulation conclusive, or if not quite so, of a nature questionable enough to induce Wellington, for the preservation of his own and the national character, to give it the construction most favourable to the weaker party. My opinion is of no importance, but it is so strong that I could not resist expressing it to you, who have access to those whose character is most interested in forming a sound one upon this very important subject. I have not spoken of La Valette. All my arguments apply in his favour as strongly as in Ney's, and surely he is not, as the other may be, any object of a bystander's indignation. He seems an honourable man throughout.

Yours ever truly,

VASSALL HOLLAND.

The above letter arrived too late. Marshal Ney had perished the day before. Lord Kinnaird somewhat injudiciously showed the Duke of Wellington the letter. The truths contained in it were probably

by that time, and have been since, very unpleasant to him. He affected to take umbrage at a passage,<sup>1</sup> which he erroneously supposed was intended to convey an imputation upon him as jealous or fearful of the military superiority of Marshal Ney. When I met him two years afterwards at Paris, he would not speak to me. This sort of distance continued, till our common friend, General Alava,<sup>2</sup> persuaded us to renew the slight intercourse which had formerly subsisted between us. We exchanged visits; he dined with me, and subsequent differences in politics have not interrupted the interchange of civility between us.

I remember him, though he is older than myself, at Eton. He was in no way distinguished there. Soon afterwards, both in his regiment and in Ireland, he was, perhaps from contrast with his elder brother, reckoned below mediocrity. In Dublin Castle his companions treated him as a good-humoured, insignificant youth; and in India he was thought to require all Lord Wellesley's affection and interest to screen him even from disgrace.<sup>3</sup> It is said that the compliance or good nature of Sir John Harris, on one occasion, procured him the peerage, which he

<sup>1</sup> Underlined in the above copy.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [Miguel Ricardo d'Alava (1771—1843), a Spanish general who obtained considerable distinction under Wellington. He was for some years Spanish representative in Paris.]

<sup>3</sup> I once asked an East Indian, who knew the details of the transaction, if his brother, Lord Wellesley, had not raised him from the ground. "The ground?" replied he, "the mire, the filth. He was lost but for Wellesley." The phrase was no doubt too strong, but there must have been great favour shown to give a colour to such expressions. Subsequent differences between the brothers may and have occurred, and the conduct of the elder has probably been offensive and almost intolerable to the younger; but can it have entirely cancelled such obligations, or justify the neglect with which he has occasionally been treated? The Duke had resumed intimate and even cordial habits with him when out of office, but on his appointment to the Premiership he dropped them entirely.—V.H.

certainly owed exclusively to Lord Wellesley's recommendation. That warning, however, if it was as serious as it is represented, roused the faculties of Arthur Wellesley. From that period he devoted himself to business and his profession. He rose rapidly through the gradations of a good officer and useful man of business to much consideration both in the State and the Army. He showed great discretion, temper, and judgment in defence of his brother against an impeachment in 1806, and in the following year he was designated by Lord Grenville to command a large expedition to Mexico. He soon afterwards began his career in Portugal.

My opinion of him was formed very early. He is not only a very capable and useful, but he is a great, fortunate, and extraordinary man, both in politics and in war. No one ever possessed greater dexterity in adapting his means to his ends. His want of any remarkable exterior accomplishments only renders this faculty more wonderful. It is possible that his wisdom may not be of the most enlarged and comprehensive, and certainly not of the most refined and delicate kind; but it is so unerring on all great occasions that it partakes at least of the character of genius. Then his apprehension is quick, his sagacity marvellous, his application indefatigable, and his decision and courage unfailing. Even his defects turn to account. A certain insensibility, real or assumed, gives his judgment uninterrupted scope for its exertion; and habitual carelessness and inaccuracy in language, disarming criticism in public, has often procured him advantages in his private intercourse with politicians, which are seldom supposed to be attainable but by qualities of a more exceptionable character. It is, indeed, rare for a man of sense,



education, and spirit to be more destitute of taste, wit, grace, or imagination. But he affects none of them, and is often humble or adroit enough to profit by the allowance made for their absence. He loves to display a knowledge of details, even when he possesses it very imperfectly; but, in general, his conversation and manners have the ineffable charm of unassuming simplicity. Though he is very close and his designs quite impenetrable, he speaks of past transactions with great readiness and ease, and has all the air of being frank and communicative. He has not quick or delicate feelings, and generosity is not the chief ingredient in his composition.

On the other hand, he has few bad passions, and can subdue them effectually when his interests, or even his convenience, require it. Good-humoured, however, as he seems in social life, he is said to be often indifferent and even harsh to inferiors,<sup>1</sup> which, if true, is a trait not rendered less unamiable by the proof which his demeanour with equals affords, that he can control his dislikes, conceal his chagrin, stifle his resentments, and command his temper when he chooses. His vanity, I have sometimes thought, exceeds his ambition; for he has occasionally seemed to prefer the appearance to the reality of doing whatever he likes. Opinions and principles may possibly sit rather loosely upon a soldier. Like his own warhorse, he may care little what troops he leads or what cause he serves, so that *He*, richly caparisoned in the front, be the chief pageant of the show and reap the benefit of the victory and the grace of the triumph.

<sup>1</sup> I have been told of this unamiable trait in his character by officers who have served under him. His unpopularity with corps that he has commanded, and especially the Engineers and Artillery, seems to confirm it.—V.H.

It must be also admitted that all public men who have an appetite for power occasionally cede some portion of consistency and opinion, and some predilections and connections, to expediency and success; but where others have made one sacrifice of the sort, the Duke of Wellington seemed at one time to lead whole hecatombs to the shrine. The cheerfulness with which he went through that unpleasant ceremony created a malicious inference that he did not value the State more, but political principles and friendships somewhat less, than his predecessors and contemporaries. His character was so interpreted during one period of his life, and especially in 1828 and 1829, by many of his contemporaries. But the subsequent publication of his correspondence, as well as his temperate and measured conduct both in and out of office, have since proved that he can sacrifice all selfish views and even his vanity and predilections to public principles, and that although generosity is not supreme she is yet not excluded from the mind where justice and prudence predominate.

He was not, at the time of which I am now treating, connected with the purest or most stoical of public men. Lord Castlereagh perhaps never entirely lost sight of certain good objects he had been taught to value in his Whig or reforming days,<sup>1</sup> but he was at the best but a temporising politician, and the unusual honours he had recently received at Courts and in Congresses had almost turned his head. It required, to use a metaphor of Mr. Frere, the strong currycomb of the House of Commons to scrape off the lacquer with which he had been varnished at

<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the French Revolution Castlereagh was a reformer and even propagandist; he disseminated Payne's pamphlet in the North of Ireland.—V.H.

Vienna; and there is reason to think that the rough discipline he experienced, on his return, irritated and wounded him so much that he never recovered his natural serenity of temper and that coolness of judgment which had hitherto constituted the chief merit of his character. On his first arrival from abroad the year before, incense such as he was accustomed to in foreign Courts seemed reserved for him here. He was greeted by a long and unusual cheer as he entered the House of Commons. But short lived were such triumphs. The dread of the Property Tax<sup>1</sup> produced innumerable petitions, and the indefatigable genius of Mr. Brougham, who, through the influence of Lord Grey and Lord Thanet, had returned to Parliament, allowed scarce one to be presented without an exposure of the policy and a derision of the capacity of the Minister. House and country were thus enflamed against that great act of confiscation, as it was hyperbolically called in the publications of the day. The Bill was rejected. The Minister, lowered as he was by his inferiority as an orator and the defeat of his great financial measure, yet determined to maintain his post.

Thus a Cabinet was continued, divided in sentiment on the great domestic question of Catholic Emancipation and defeated by a House of Commons on their favourite scheme of finance. Such a surrender of the functions of a Ministry to a Court, combined with such an acknowledgment of their want of authority in Parliament, effected practically a more violent change in the nature of our Government than many measures which lawyers and historians stigmatise as

<sup>1</sup> [The income tax imposed "for and during the continuance of the war, and no longer." The Government was defeated by a majority of 37, and the tax repealed.]



innovations. Whether the result will be beneficial or injurious to the Commonwealth, time alone can show. It would require no great ingenuity to trace many phenomena which have since perplexed, and some which do still perplex, our political system, to that original. But mine is a narrative and not a dissertation.

The fruits of that victory over Ministers, which had been gained in a great measure by the exertions of Mr. Brougham, were thrown away by the imprudence of that same powerful but unmanageable member of Opposition. On some trivial occasion he launched out into an unseasonable invective against the habits, expenses, and personal qualities of the Prince Regent. This diatribe, deserved or undeserved, would, at all times, have been too coarse for the taste of the assembly in which it was delivered; and at that particular period it had the effect of estranging many members, who had been recently softened towards the Whigs by voting with them against the Property Tax. Mr. Ponsonby was grieved, Mr. Tierney appalled, at the fresh instance of indiscretion. It was the more unaccountable because Brougham had during that Session evinced more disposition to concert with the party than he had affected for some years. He had even resumed his habits with me, after an absence from my house of six years, upon an understanding that he should be received as if we had parted in the morning.<sup>1</sup> His jealousy of Mr. Horner had somewhat abated. I should be loth to suspect that he had even then detected the seeds of a disease which were to bring that excellent man shortly to the grave, and that foreseeing the untimely removal of his rival, he was willing to conciliate those whom he had avoided from jealousy of an early friend.

<sup>1</sup> [See *ante*, p. 45.]

Whatever were his secret motives or public extravagances, he, and still more Sir Samuel Romilly, rose greatly in estimation as Parliamentary speakers in the course of 1816. Lord Castlereagh, who had felt the want of support, was not averse to secure it even in the person of one whom he hated—Mr. Canning. That gentleman had submitted to be employed by him at Lisbon in 1814, tempted, it was said, by large emoluments, and impelled by the vexations which a discontented and precarious set of adherents out of office created him at home.<sup>1</sup> He accepted, on his return, the Board of Control. The selection of that place seemed to indicate that neither he nor his employers thought constant or familiar intercourse any very binding cement to their new connection. The Prince Regent also, in all probability, preferred at that time an arrangement which required no personal interviews between him and the new member of the Cabinet. Mr. Canning had, indeed, advised the Princess of Wales to absent herself, and that absence was agreeable enough to the Prince Regent; but the circumstances which gave any advice from him to the Princess great weight could not be equally so. I have myself heard the Prince Regent more than insinuate causes for such ascendancy, which would not have led him to anticipate much comfort or ease in any frequent intercourse with her adviser.

No man was so well qualified as Mr. Canning to cope in debate with the established as well as rising orators in Opposition. It was prudent, therefore, in Lord Liverpool to suggest, and equally so in Lord

<sup>1</sup> [Canning was living in Lisbon at the time for the benefit of his son's health. Lord Liverpool, learning he was on the spot, pressed him to take the post of Ambassador Extraordinary, and his offer was accepted.]

Castlereagh to acquiesce in, a junction which placed so brilliant a speaker in the front of their battle; nor was it less so in Mr. Canning to accept of a post on their side, without stickling for what is calling the "lead" in the House of Commons. His talents were sure ere long to overshadow those of his nominal chief but real rival. There was no party of followers who could feel their honour wounded at his taking a station comparatively subordinate, and he had, moreover, already descended from his vantage-ground by the more hazardous acceptance of his Lisbon mission from and under Lord Castlereagh. It is not, however, to be denied that his condescension on those two occasions lowered him for a time in public estimation. It required several fortunate incidents, as well as the resources of application and genius which he had at command, to regain that station to which his abilities and character fairly entitled him.

About the time that he resumed a seat in Council and Parliament, the person whose example and precepts had in earlier days enflamed his ambition and improved his talents, Mr. Sheridan, was closing a career more fit,

To point a moral and adorn a tale,

than to exercise the pen of those who, like myself, have shared some portion of his friendship, enjoyed his society, and retain regard for his memory. Nothing but a sense of justice to others could induce me to inflict any on him. Mr. Canning had the gratification of offering some pecuniary assistance, and what was, in truth, more real service, as well as more agreeable to him, of paying some attention to his early friend in his last sickness and adversity. The want of such



attentions from some great names, and from the Prince Regent in particular, no doubt cut him to the quick. It was perhaps a theme on which his biographer was fairly entitled to moralise. But when Mr. Moore censures the opulent and titled companions of Mr. Sheridan's happier days for not relieving him from his pecuniary embarrassments, I, whom he almost as inaccurately excepts from his censure, am bound to say that it is unjust. To my knowledge, some aid of that nature was offered, and more was possibly accepted than his biographer relates or than his benefactors ever wished to have recorded.

That the real amount of his debts was small is, I believe, correctly true; but that it was so is not less strange than true. The inference that therefore an advance of a sum equal to the debts would have relieved him from his distresses may seem plausible; but a little reflection on the real state of the case and on the character of Mr. Sheridan will show it to be erroneous. His debts, though reported to be enormous, might be of inconsiderable amount,<sup>1</sup> but they were of a most complicated nature, and known only to himself. Without his assistance it would have been impossible, with it not easy, to ascertain their extent. He would never have assisted any inquiry, or complied with any limitation or arrangement to secure the application of the money so raised exclusively to his creditors. Had he even consented to co-operate (which, if my memory does not mislead me, he above once refused to do), his inveterate habits of subterfuges and mis-statement were such that

<sup>1</sup> I think I have since heard that £7,000 or £9,000 would have covered all those that could be legally substantiated.—V.H.

[Mr. Rae, in his *Biography*, puts the figure at £5,000, and states that the whole sum was paid by Sheridan's relations.]

little truth could have been ascertained, and none without affronting and mortifying him.

In such circumstances, to impute want of generosity or dereliction of friendship to those who hesitated to afford him pecuniary aid, and much more to such as merely omitted to come forward for the purpose of incurring expense in a thankless and impracticable undertaking, is manifest and gross injustice. The same man who would cheerfully sacrifice a thousand pounds to save a friend from permanent distress might very consistently withhold a hundred which would merely postpone his arrest for a week. But Sheridan's mind was so perversely constituted that he would have received without scruple the latter boon from a common acquaintance, but would never have pardoned a brother for conferring the former, if he had exacted any co-operation or any unpleasant acknowledgments as the condition of it.

It is exceedingly painful to chronicle the infirmities of Sheridan's character and the faults of Mr. Moore's book. But that lively, popular, and warm-hearted writer, in his zeal to exalt his countryman, takes facts for granted, and then draws hasty conclusions, not only unfair to our aristocracy (in whose defence I am nowise interested), but injurious to that association of public men to whom Mr. Sheridan, as well as myself, professed himself attached, and of whom I have, in a manner, constituted myself the historian. The injustice of those inferences can only be exposed by recording the failings that really disqualified Mr. Sheridan for a station to which his intellectual powers, as well as many other endowments, would have entitled him among his contemporaries.

It was neither Irish birth nor low extraction (as Mr. Moore not very covertly insinuates) that excluded

Mr. Burke or Mr. Sheridan from a pre-eminence attained by Lord North, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Pitt, in their respective parties. Mr. Burke, albeit abounding in knowledge, zeal, and genius, and of far less questionable honour and integrity, had yet so little judgment in debate and so little command of his temper in council or in society, that it was at all times a problem whether he did more harm or good to the side which he espoused. Had he been placed at the head of a party, he would have been left without followers in the course of a year. Such is, at least, a fair inference from his mismanagement of the impeachment of Hastings and his conduct during the absence of Mr. Fox, in the King's illness, in 1788. On the latter occasion, in less than six weeks he had ceased to be on speaking terms with any man of consequence in the party. His intemperate language, more than any other circumstance, enabled Mr. Pitt to rivet his popularity by an unconstitutional restriction on the prerogatives and a personal stigma on the Heir-Apparent of the Crown.

Mr. Sheridan, although far more disposed to covet and better qualified to acquire popularity, was yet less likely to attain the permanent confidence of a body of independent English gentlemen. I do not speak merely of his dissipation and intemperate habits, though towards the close of his life amounting almost to disqualifications; but there were others of a graver nature, such as not even his fascinating manners and exquisite wit (for the attainment of special and immediate purposes almost irresistible) could, in any protracted commerce or relationship with him, counterbalance. Those who enjoyed his society most and knew him best, even while they retained affection for him, were compelled to acknowledge that jealousy



of disposition, delight in artifice and contrivance, and a proneness to gratify his own vanity with disregard to the feelings and reputation of other men, and, above all, an occasional indifference to truth, rendered any habitual reliance on his conduct preposterous in the extreme. The irregularities and mortifications of his early life and education may, in a great degree, palliate such defects in his moral character ; but there is no denying them, and the injudicious endeavour to ascribe all their consequences to the injustice of others has compelled me to record them. His father,<sup>1</sup> a famous actor, was a harsh, unjust, and needy man, generally negligent and at times vexatious to his children. He seems to have been jealous of his son's talents. None of them, if we except the power of bitter sarcasm, were inherited from him. That unamiable faculty he must, indeed, have possessed, if it be true that, on its being remarked how wonderful was the delineation of opposite characters in the *School for Scandal*, he replied : " Richard had only to dip his pen in his own heart, and he had both Joseph and Charles." His mother,<sup>2</sup> the authoress of *Sidney Bidulph*, was a gentle, virtuous, clever, and unhappy woman. She died abroad of a consumption ; and her sufferings were aggravated by hard usage from her husband and anxiety about her absent and neglected children.

The salary for Richard Brinsley's education at Harrow, where he had been left, was irregularly paid. He was slighted by the masters and tormented by the boys, as a poor player's son. I have heard him relate, with tears in his eyes,<sup>3</sup> that he never met

<sup>1</sup> [Thomas Sheridan (1719—1788).]

<sup>2</sup> Her maiden name was Chamberlayne.—V.H.

<sup>3</sup> He assured me, at the same time, that his treatment had created in his mind such an aversion for the stage, that he had never even seen a play when he wrote *The Duenna* ; that he engaged in that work

with kindness at school but from Dr. Parr.<sup>1</sup> He was soon afterwards removed to Bath. His father had a project of establishing a school of rhetoric there, and destined his son to be one of his ushers. The scheme failed, and the intended usher commenced a man of wit and gallantry.

The adventures of that part of his life are, I believe, correctly recounted by Moore. He used to relate a scene with his father, about this period, somewhat less romantic than ludicrous. The retired actor was in the habit of haranguing his two sons after supper on the consequences of drunkenness and the motives which had induced him to renounce that vice and avoid all excess in wine. To enforce his precepts he denied them all access to his bottle, but he filled and emptied his own glass so frequently in the earnestness of discourse, that ere the lecture on sobriety was finished the two disciples were compelled to convey the professor of that virtue drunk to bed.

His long confinement from illness in Soho Square was the only period of his life in which he devoted himself to reading or study. He had no great appetite for general knowledge. Endowed as he was with the powers of memory and observation, he had less learning than the common run of well-educated men in society. He was conscious of his deficiency; yet he sought to make it appear greater than it really was, and concealed the in-

from absolute indigence; and that, throughout his life, he had never seen a representation from beginning to end, except of his own pieces at rehearsals. I did not think it worth while to repeat these incredible, or at least exaggerated, stories in the text.—V.H.

<sup>1</sup> [Samuel Parr (1747—1825), classical scholar, and master at Harrow School. Several letters written by him describing young Sheridan's promise and ability have been published by Moore.]

formation he had, with the hopes of giving to his wit and eloquence (often very elaborate) the air of genius and inspiration. He managed this so well that his pleasantry and replies appeared to common acquaintance sudden sallies excited by the occasion, and even to those who suspected them to be studied, tinctured with a sort of archness and complacency at the opportunity of introducing them, which lent them fresh relish, and added to their effect in society.

He was almost as wonderful in his physical constitution as in his intellectual powers. He seemed built for longevity; and no man was better made to bear fatigue, labour, or debauch. Even in hearing and seeing he had the advantage of other people. Vain as he was, he, in words and manner and sometimes in actions, acknowledged the superiority of Mr. Fox,<sup>1</sup> and even liked his society as much as he could that of any man who had advantages over him. He was, in short, less jealous of him than he would have been of another in the same situation. The unaffected admiration which he knew Mr. Fox entertained and professed for his wit, eloquence, and writings, in some measure disarmed his malignity.

The truth is, that although vindictive where his vanity had been wounded, he was not an ill-natured

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Sheridan has more than once observed to me, with great apparent sincerity and warm commendation, the astonishing resources of Mr. Fox's mind, and the no less astonishing generosity with which he would frankly impart his thoughts and materials to any speaker of his side. "He seemed," said Sheridan, "to exhaust the subject he spoke upon; yet when he sat down he could, and often did, supply those who came after him with fresh and excellent matter nearly equal to what he had used, and quite new to the person about to speak; and, again, from those whose turn in debate came before him, he never concealed any thought, but on the contrary would communicate to them most readily the best argument and even the liveliest illustration that occurred to him in favour of his view of the question."—V.H



man. He could pardon an injury more readily than a slight, and either, I fear I must add, more easily than a great obligation. To inferiors he was not merely civil and serviceable, but he was kind and considerate. Where his own self-love was no wise concerned, he was disposed to soothe that of others, and that, too, in cases where he could have no view of courting popularity. Even on his death-bed, the old woman put into the house by his creditors was so won by his anxiety lest she should lose her dinner by waiting on him, that she contracted an attachment for him as strong as if she had attended him from his childhood.

I saw him at that period. Enough transpired, even in those moments of distress, to show that any attempt to relieve him from his embarrassments would have been fruitless, all concert with him for such a purpose impracticable, and any reliance on his assertions hazardous in the extreme. Mrs. Sheridan assured me that in his last illness he professed much contrition for his sins, and Dr. Howley, Bishop of London,<sup>1</sup> unquestionably attended and read prayers to him, while he folded his hands, being unable to speak. Mrs. Sheridan, indeed, related other circumstances in proof of the sincerity of his repentance and earnestness for forgiveness; but the Archbishop's recollection by no means confirmed them, and her anxious wishes or general knowledge of Mr. Sheridan's opinion might lead her somewhat hastily to believe them. It is true, however, that he always affected a sense of religion, and if some traits of superstition are proofs of such feeling, he was not exempt from them. The pious love to infer the truth of religion from the compunction of persons of irregular habits on their death-beds. Where the case

<sup>1</sup> [William Howley (1766—1848), appointed Bishop of London in 1813, and Archbishop of Canterbury in 1828.]

occurs, religion has a right to such argument as it supplies. It would be unjust to withhold any credible testimony to the fact, when it occurs. I believe Mr. Sheridan died with strong religious apprehensions on his mind ; but what does that prove ? That a sense of religion may exist, where the moral virtues it inculcates are habitually neglected.

Of the brilliancy of wit and fascination of manner, which made one forget in his society so many and such grievous faults, I have spoken more than once in the preceding chapters and elsewhere. My pen has been reluctantly employed here in tracing the darker shades of his portrait, from an apprehension that the false glitter thrown over them might injure the truth of the more general picture of public men, which I have endeavoured faithfully to delineate.

But let me not close so painful a judgment on a man whose genius has often delighted me, without reminding my readers that no Englishman since the time of Edmund Waller has so indisputably attained excellence in the three branches of conversation, composition, and oratory, as the person whose defects I have been thus compelled to recall. His best speeches recalled in fame and effect those of Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt, Lord North, or Mr. Canning. If they had not the characteristic excellencies of Mr. Burke, Mr. Windham, or Mr. Grattan, they far surpassed in effect, though not in genius, the happiest efforts of those three eccentric men. Many years after the Begum speech in the House of Commons, Mr. Fox pronounced it to be the best ever delivered within the walls of Parliament, and Mr. Pitt is reported to have been of the same opinion.<sup>1</sup> Indeed,

<sup>1</sup> [Sir Gilbert Elliot (Lord Minto) writes to Lady Elliot of this speech : " It was by many degrees the most excellent and astonishing

he implied as much, by unexpectedly assenting to the motion with which it concluded. Other speakers of his age have shone in written composition; but what modern orator but Sheridan ever produced a masterpiece in any literature? Burke's best work holds not the same relation to common political pamphlets or ordinary metaphysical disputations, as the *School for Scandal* bears to the comedies on our stage. If the conversation of Fox, Windham, or Grattan abounded more with philosophy and knowledge, and if it was occasionally as varied and delightful as Mr. Sheridan's, yet it was not so well adapted to the taste of all classes, nor so remarkable for playful satire and vivacity, for quick discernment and well-bred exposure of individual character. FitzPatrick, Hare, Lord John Townshend, and others more nearly his rivals in that respect, never aspired to the fame of leading orators or classical authors. It was reserved for Sheridan to be brilliant alike in the club, the theatre, and the senate. If we must acknowledge in some features of Pope's inimitable portrait of Wharton a resemblance to the prominent blemishes of Sheridan, we may yet with confidence aver that the poet, in recording the genius and versatility of the "wonder of the age," falls far short of the splendour and variety which dazzled and delighted the theatre, the Parliament, and the public in our own contemporary—Mr. Sheridan.

In this same year of 1816 died another friend, whom I had found in the ranks of Opposition, if not in the party of the Whigs, thirty years before—Charles, third Earl Stanhope. I have spoken of him at length in

performance I ever heard, and surpasses all I ever imagined possible in eloquence and ability." (*Life and Letters of Sir G. Elliot*, vol. i. p. 123).]

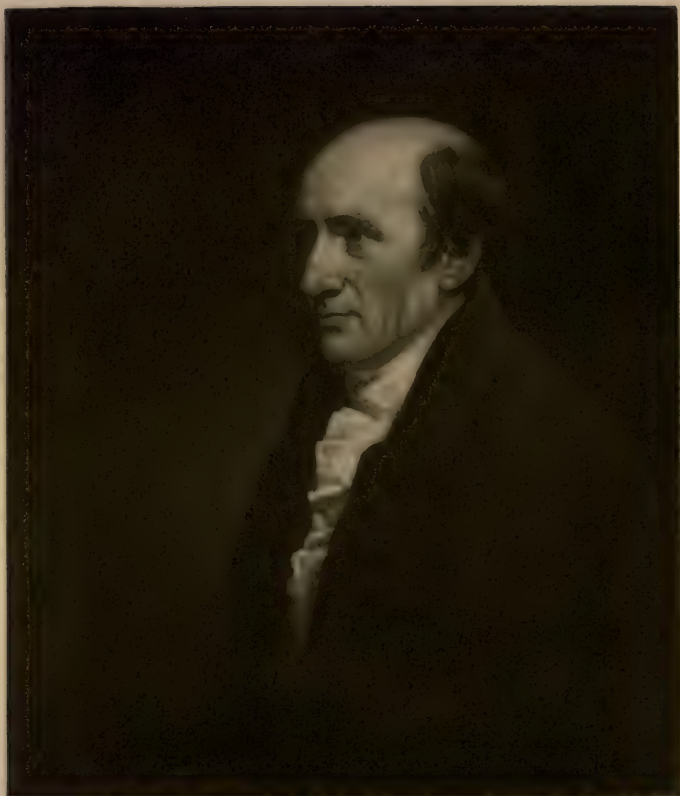


the first Book of these notes.<sup>1</sup> The House of Lords, in spite of his eccentricities, and I, perhaps in consequence of them, regretted his loss, and missed the originality with which he seldom failed to enliven our debates. It fell to my lot as his legatee and executor to compose the inscription on his monument in Chevening, and I have the satisfaction of thinking that I have there recorded the peculiarity for which he would most like to be distinguished, without wounding the feelings of his family who had some reason to be hurt both at his conduct and his will.<sup>2</sup> The present Lord told me very handsomely that he always read it with pleasure, for there was not a word in it that was not true.

The forwardness in person, character, and understanding of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, and the dread lest her mother might contrive for her or she devise for herself an alliance or something worse, induced the Court to look out for a marriage for her, soon after the proposal of the Prince of Orange had been rejected. The alleged motives of that rejection led to the reasonable preference of a Prince unfettered with any duties which would call him away from England. The Duke and Duchess of York and Lord Anglesey suggested, as I believe, the Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg; and some pardonable contrivances, powerfully aided by the very handsome person of the Prince himself, secured the full acquiescence of

<sup>1</sup> [See *Memoirs of the Whig Party*, vol. i. p. 34, where many curious and interesting anecdotes of him are related.]

<sup>2</sup> [Lord Stanhope left practically the whole of his disposable property to his executors. The estates devolved on his son and heir. The rest of the family, however, obtained nothing under the will, on account of their conduct at the period of Lord Stanhope's separation from Mr. Pitt, except such sums as they were entitled to by marriage settlements.]



*Charles, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl Stanhope*





the young lady. Much of the curiosity which the story of his courtship might have excited is destroyed by the death of his Royal consort next year, an event which produced a sensation more flattering to the memory of the young Princess than to her surviving relations, and more illustrative of the strength of the passion of hope than of loyalty.

Among the marriages of the Royal Family which followed was one between the Duke of Kent and the widowed sister of Prince Leopold. That alliance may in its results revive the importance of Prince Leopold, to all appearance suddenly extinguished in this country in 1817. On his marriage in 1816, an enormous annuity of £50,000 per annum was granted him. He was also given, by an Act of Parliament, all the rights, except that of succession to the throne, which attach to a descendant of the Princess Sophia. He, with over-caution, declined a peerage: George IV. was afterwards little disposed to renew the offer. Personal beauty and circumspection were at that time Leopold's most vaunted qualifications. The vulgar thought him, in his capacity of needy German Prince, and without much further proof, sordid and rapacious. The visible improvement of his Royal bride, in the course of the few months she was destined to live, gained him the credit of acquiring, by discretion and sagacity, great ascendancy over her mind. Whether his instructions or further experience would ever have enabled her to fulfil the somewhat extravagant expectations entertained by the people may be left to a chapter in that science termed *media scientia*, which the schoolmen describe as inscrutable to the Deity himself.

The great virtues of Princes and Princesses who die young have frequently been the object of pleasantry,

and it cannot be denied that the sudden extinction of an existence full of hope, in the person of a young and pretty bride, was well calculated to mislead the best feelings of the country into such an illusion. Yet, in the judgment of sobriety, little had appeared in this young lady to justify the inordinate grief at her death. She was pretty and she was gay; nor had she betrayed any propensities to remind men of her mother. But, on the other hand, she had shown even in the nursery, and still more in the months preceding her marriage, that she inherited, together with the Prince Regent's quickness of apprehension and feeling, some of his greatest defects, *viz.*, a love of exaggeration, if not a disregard of truth, in professions and complaints, a passion for talebearers and favourites, and all those petty failings and practices which lead to what the French call *tracasseries* and which rendered the private Court of her father, whether Heir-Apparent, Prince Regent, or King, the abode of uneasy heartburnings and jealousies and the scene of squabbles and scrapes, embarrassing, indeed, to the progress of State affairs, but almost below the notice of politicians, and quite unworthy of the province of history.

I have thus adverted prematurely to the untimely death of the Princess Charlotte, and to what little I knew from report of her character, when the course of my narrative had only brought me to her marriage. To prevent repetition, I will here mention that on my return to England in November, 1817, three days after her death, everybody I met between London and Dover, including post-boys and turnpike men, bore signs of mourning on their persons. Yet so little was this national affection extended to other parts of the family, that calumnies, representing the Regent

and Queen Charlotte as rejoiced at the catastrophe, and even guilty of accelerating it, were very generally credited by the vulgar, and not repelled even in better educated circles with that scorn and contempt which justice and truth required.

The extraordinary sensation produced by her death was, indeed, a stronger indication of the unpopularity of the Prince Regent and his brothers than of the childish affection for Royalty, which the people of England so frequently display. The events which had intervened between her marriage and her death, and the tone assumed by the Prince Regent's Government thereupon, had soured the lower classes of the community, and sensibly lessened the small stock of popularity which the Prince Regent had ever possessed. Although the Alien Bill had been most unnecessarily renewed in 1816, that Session of Parliament closed without any appearance of disaffection in the country or any symptom of ill-humour in Parliament. A bad harvest ensued; the people were distressed. Lord Sidmouth, who held the Seals of the Home Department, listened with inauspicious complacency to every tale which officious magistrates and designing spies brought of conspiracies and impending tumults. The faction of Levellers, Jacobins, or Radicals, which is never formidable, yet never wholly extinct in England or Scotland, resumed their practice of disseminating seditious and blasphemous handbills. They availed themselves of the elaborate blunders of Major Cartwright,<sup>1</sup> the able mischief of William Cobbett,<sup>2</sup> and the brawling eloquence (*loquentia potius quam*

<sup>1</sup> [Major John Cartwright (1740—1824), the descendant of an old Northamptonshire family. He served in the Navy and Militia, and became an ardent reformer and political pamphleteer.]

<sup>2</sup> [William Cobbett (1762—1835), political writer and originator of the *Weekly Political Register*.]



*eloquentia*) of Hunt,<sup>1</sup> to promote the cry for universal suffrage and annual Parliaments, among a class whose sufferings give to the prospect of change, whatever name it may assume, the pleasing colours of improvement.

The Prince Regent, apt enough to suspect danger, was yet more pleased at encountering it, whether real or imaginary, with arbitrary authority or coercion. Lord Sidmouth, either from sheer credulity or from subserviency, was busy in collecting foolish stories of plots,<sup>2</sup> and earnest in recommending measures of precaution and severity.

On January 28 Parliament met for the dispatch of business. I went down about four o'clock with an intention of reading the King's Speech (a copy of which is usually lying on the table or the woolsacks, in the interval between its delivery and the resumption of the House) before business began. There were no Lords: there was some difficulty in procuring a copy of the Speech from the Chancellor. He was said to be at dinner, but he was closeted in his own room with Lord Sidmouth. The clerks seemed disconcerted, and everything, if not out of place and in dismay, at a stand and in suspense.

At length the mystery was cleared up. The Duke of Sussex, who arrived before five, told me the Prince Regent had not only been hissed but pelted in his way to and from the House, and he whispered to me significantly, "He himself *pretends* he was shot at." Accordingly, on the resumption of the House, before the Select Vestry Bill was moved or the Chancellor had read the Speech from the woolsack, up rose my Lord

<sup>1</sup> [Henry Hunt (1773—1835), reformer and orator. Originally a successful farmer in Wiltshire.]

<sup>2</sup> "Valentine Day," and "Post office at Maidstone."—V.H.

Sidmouth, and with more than his usual solemnity (sufficient though it be to that or almost any other occasion) stated that the Prince, on his return through the Park, had been grossly insulted and assailed.

The Duke of Montrose (Master of the Horse) then related, in a manner somewhat indistinct and confused, that a stroke had been *propelled* against the carriage in which he was accompanying the Prince Regent *by a force stronger than a man's arm*. Two holes, he added, were made in the glass, and he described their appearance. Lord James Murray, who was in Waiting, was then called to the bar. His evidence led to the inference that a shot had been aimed from one of the trees in the Park, and he conjectured that an air pistol, for he probably perceived that the concealment of an air gun was somewhat difficult, had been the instrument. Lord Grey cross-examined him, which Lord Grenville whispered to me was injudicious. He, Lord Grenville, soon afterwards spoke, as did Lords Eldon and Sidmouth, with becoming horror of such an outrage; but he did not affect, as the others did, great agitation and alarm at the event, which, in spite of his propriety and decorum, he must have deemed questionable. Lord Sidmouth, to vent his feelings of indignation and alarm with an equal attention to pathos and precedent, had the journals of 1795, when a similar event had occurred, spread out before him; and bade the clerk, when one question was disposed of, *look out what was to be done next*. He was disconcerted at finding that the absence of the Masters-in-Chancery would compel us to convey our horror to the Commons by an inferior servant of the House.

A conference took place. The Houses, as indeed it would appear the conspirators had been also, were

strictly regulated by precedent of 1795 : the expression of our indignation and the assurances of our loyalty were couched verbatim in the words of the resolution and address of that year, and though the House of Commons did not, as formerly, adjourn the debate on the address, we did. The Prince said, and perhaps thought, it was *a shot*; so said, and so thought, his father in 1795. But when Lord Onslow stooped in the carriage to look for the stone or bullet which had broken the window, George III. reminded him, saying: "Sit up, my Lord; they will say we are afraid." In this rehearsal of a stale and insipid comedy the only little incident that marked dignity or presence of mind was omitted. On neither occasion was a shot fired. Lord Eldon assured me that he had in his possession the stone which had broken the window in 1795, and which was found at the bottom of the State carriage. He preserved it, with the dagger produced in the Commons by Mr. Burke,<sup>1</sup> as memorials of those strange times, surely not as marks of the sagacity or honesty of those he affects to admire!

The device this time did not greatly assist Ministers. It made little sensation either way. Government, however, in spite of a good but heavy speech from Lord Grey, with which he was more dissatisfied than his [—], and a spirited one from Lord Wellesley, met with ample support from the House and more countenance from Lord Grenville than was of good omen for the preservation of our party. Some

<sup>1</sup> [The scene here referred to took place during a discussion of the Alien Bill on December 28, 1792. Burke, who had quarrelled with Fox over the French Revolution, mentioned that an order had been given at Birmingham for 3,000 daggers, and, hurling one suddenly on to the floor of the House, exclaimed, "This is what you are to gain by an alliance with France."]



approximation between Burdett and Grey was produced by the recurrence of coercive measures. Cobbett and Hunt took occasion, in letters to Lord Grey and interviews with me, to adhere to a declaration of Lord Cochrane,<sup>1</sup> that the endeavours of the people should be directed to the removal of the Ministry and the elevation of the Whigs to power. It has happened more than once in the course of my life that the party called Jacobins, Levellers, or Radical Reformers, after reviling the Whigs and strengthening the High-Church Party by lowering their opponents, have sought in the hour of danger to shelter themselves under the party they have so traduced. The Whigs, and let it [be] spoken with pride, have on such occasions, though smarting from the recent ingratitude of their suppliants, been ever ready from principle and generosity to stretch their protecting hands to persons calumniated or persecuted by power.

I saw Cobbett twice. His upright figure indicated the drill of a soldier, his ruddy complexion and homely accent the subsequent character of a farmer as well as his original condition. Neither countenance nor conversation (at least at this time) were at all of a piece with the sprightliness of his style, the shrewdness of his remarks, or the closeness of his reasoning in written compositions. His objects were, the co-operation of the Whigs in public meetings for a change of Ministry, and their protection and countenance if he wrote in their favour. In such objects I told him Whigs could not but concur, but I avoided all appearance of any closer connection. He was alarmed at the threatened suspension of the

<sup>1</sup> [Thomas Cochrane (1775—1860), son of Archibald, ninth Earl of Dundonald, on whose death he succeeded to the titles in 1831.]

Habeas Corpus.<sup>1</sup> He very unaffectedly acknowledged his distrust of his own nerves, and a dread of behaving meanly and basely if arrested; he, therefore, hinted at an intention, which he afterwards executed, of retiring to America. He earnestly asseverated that he never had, and never would, belong to any political Opposition whatever.

No concert, much less union, with this extreme branch of Radicals ensued. Lord Grey, with the full consent of a large meeting of his Parliamentary friends (called February 24, 1817), engaged on an opposition to the suspension of the Habeas Corpus and to sundry coercive measures resorted to by Government, and in which Lord Grenville and his immediate friends, though disclaiming all rupture with the Whigs and professing undiminished regard, openly acquiesced. Burdett soon and rapidly resumed his old personal habits with many Whigs. Good will and communication between the Whigs and him, as leader of reformers, remained uninterrupted, till his deep but often shaded tinge of Toryism,<sup>2</sup> at last, separated him from all the parties and persons with whom he had ever acted in public. Parliamentary Reform, however, was not yet adopted as an indispensable article in the Whig creed; nor did the Burdettites pledge themselves to act as a party in bringing Whigs into power.

Lord Fitzwilliam,<sup>3</sup> from old affections for many and from recent disgust at the system of espionage so unnecessary and so revolting to a generous and

<sup>1</sup> [The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended during the greater part of the year 1817.]

<sup>2</sup> I transcribe this book in 1838, and this clause is added to my sentiment: Burdett's defection and recurrence to High Tory principles being in 1837.—V.H.

<sup>3</sup> [William, fourth Earl Fitzwilliam (1748—1833), Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, 1794—1795.]

honourable mind, sided without hesitation with us. From this period, he and his large connection became active and important members of the popular division of the Whig party. With little talent and less acquirements, he was, throughout life, one of the most considerable men in the country and a striking instance of that most agreeable truth—that courage and honesty in great situations more than supply the place of policy or talent. It was not his relationship to Lord Rockingham, though no doubt an advantage, nor his princely fortune, though a yet greater, which conferred the sort of importance he enjoyed for half a century in this country. He derived it more directly and more certainly from his goodness and generosity, and from the combination of gentleness and courage which distinguished his amiable and unpretending character. Such unblemished purity and such unobtrusive intrepidity, such generosity of feeling, firmness of purpose, and tenderness of heart, meeting in one of high station and princely fortune, commanded the affection and confidence of the public; and Lord Fitzwilliam enjoyed them, beyond even those of his own class who united much greater reach of understanding and more assiduity of business to superior personal accomplishments and advantages.

He had been named of the Committee,<sup>1</sup> but he fearlessly and publicly condemned the evidence which had there been admitted. The suspension of the Habeas Corpus was, nevertheless, carried in the face of Lord Wellesley's and Lord Grey's opposition. Cobbett fled to America, and returned, when the Suspension Act had expired, with the bones of Tom

<sup>1</sup> [The secret Committee appointed to inquire into the cases which had occurred of meetings alleged to be dangerous to the public tranquillity.]



Paine and a stronger disposition than ever to indulge in scurrilous language and factious practices. The Radical party had manifestly decreased in numbers, and the unprovoked measures of 1817 seemed invented for the purpose of reviving its malignity and recruiting its force by persecution. They had in my judgment that effect.

The country this year sustained the loss of Francis Horner, a man whose sobriety of judgment and patient application of considerable powers to the best and wisest purposes of a public life would have placed him ere long at the head of the rational friends of liberty (including Whigs and reformers) in the House of Commons. His constitution was weak, and by neglect of it he had brought on symptoms of atrophy. He repaired, by the advice of physicians and at the earnest entreaty of friends, to a milder climate: but it was too late. He died at Pisa on [February 8], 1817.<sup>1</sup> Could anything connected with such a misfortune (which was to me, personally as well as politically, a very great one) be termed gratifying or satisfactory, the expression of regret at his loss in private, in Parliament, and in public, would deserve those epithets. Lord Morpeth, in moving the writ for St. Mawes, paid a feeling and judicious tribute to his solid virtues and rising merit; he was applauded and supported by many of the most respectable members of both sides of the House, including Mr. Manners Sutton and Sir Samuel Romilly, the last too soon, alas! destined to follow the pupil he so feelingly lamented.

That great lawyer and philosopher was himself improving rapidly in Parliamentary oratory, and yet more rapidly advancing in the estimation and

<sup>1</sup> [Horner was only thirty-eight years old when he died.]

confidence of the people. During the Sessions of 1817 and 1818 he mitigated many parts of the coercive bills. His arguments against capital punishment made slow but deep impression on the public, and, though still a lawyer in the greatest practice, he was at that period more nearly the leader of the Whig party in the House of Commons than any other member. Brougham, who, I fear, from motives of jealousy had much derided the tribute paid to the memory of Horner, yet avowed and felt some deference for Romilly.

It was, I think, in 1817 that I moved an inquiry into the treatment of Napoleon at St. Helena. Information derived from Count Montholon and from the Bonaparte family fully justified my statement; but the injudicious and exaggerated reports printed by a *valet-de-chambre*<sup>1</sup> enabled Lord Bathurst,<sup>2</sup> by refuting what I did *not* say and quoting the publication instead of my speech, to assume the appearance of contradicting what I *did* say. I did not divide, though Lord Darnley, never deficient in natural generosity, showed some disposition to urge it on the House.

In general, my political friends both in the Lords and the Commons,<sup>3</sup> with the exception of Lord Ebrington<sup>4</sup> and Mr. Abercromby<sup>5</sup> (for I do not reckon such a restless busybody as Sir Robert

<sup>1</sup> [The book here referred to by Lord Holland was said to be by Santini—Napoleon's gamekeeper, haircutter, and tailor. It is in reality a fabrication, and "was written by Colonel Maceroni, an Anglo-Italian follower of Murat's, who has left some readable memoirs." (Lord Rosebery's *The Last Phase*).]

<sup>2</sup> [Secretary of State for War and the Colonies.]

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Brougham was particularly averse to meddling with a matter he deemed so unpalatable to the Court and the country.—V.H.

<sup>4</sup> [Hugh Fortescue, afterwards second Earl Fortescue (1783—1861).]

<sup>5</sup> [James Abercromby, afterwards created Lord Dunfermline (1776—1858). Speaker of the House of Commons, 1835—1839.]

Wilson), were shy of meddling with a subject which they ignorantly deemed unpopular in the public and positively knew to be offensive at Court. I had and have the satisfaction of believing that my motion, ill-supported as it was, had an effect in alleviating the ill-treatment of a great man: but, having recorded all I know of him in another chapter of this work, I pass to other subjects in this.

I spent the summer and autumn of 1817 in Holland and at Paris. It was remarked to me by Mr. A. Baring,<sup>1</sup> and the remark was confirmed by M. Pozzo di Borgo,<sup>2</sup> that the intense application of the Duke of Wellington to the financial parts of the treaty, combined with his known sagacity in adapting his means to his ends, indicated that his views on returning to England would be directed to the Treasury. He did, in truth, devote his mind most earnestly to the financial Committee, and studied most intensely the questions of currency, resumption of cash payments, taxation, expenditure, and exchanges.

During the recess Lord Sidmouth attempted to justify his silly alarms of revolution by yet more silly prosecutions against writings termed seditious and blasphemous. Hone was indicted for an innocent parody.<sup>3</sup> It was hypocritically represented as intended to bring the Scriptures into ridicule, and the Prince

<sup>1</sup> [Alexander Baring (1774—1848), created Lord Ashburton in 1835.]

<sup>2</sup> [Carlo Andrea (1764—1842), a Corsican, born at "Pozzo di Borgo," near Ajaccio, whence he took his name. He entered the Russian service after the final capture of Corsica by the French, and was Russian Ambassador in Paris from 1815 to 1834, when he was transferred to London.]

<sup>3</sup> [William Hone (1780—1843), writer and bookseller. The work was written satirically against the Government, and parodied the Church Catechism, Litany, and Athanasian Creed. He was brought to trial, but was acquitted on all counts; and was afterwards presented with the sum of £3,000, raised by public subscription.]



Regent affected much sanctimonious resentment at those who abetted blasphemy and profaneness by charitably subscribing to alleviate the sufferings of a persecuted bookseller. Many of them, and the Duke of Bedford particularly, were distinguished in their stations for their attachment and reverence for religion; but it was pretended that disapprobation of so indecorous an act as the relief of a blasphemer was the motive for preferring Lord Grantham,<sup>1</sup> with neither residence nor property and only an expectancy in Bedfordshire, to the Duke, who had the largest property, and Woburn Abbey, in that county. The Duke was more nettled than became him at being so passed over. He wrote the Prince Regent a letter, which, like most from his pen, was well composed. It met with general applause. Yet to me it seemed, in judgment, defective and, in principle, almost indefensible. Not so thought the public. Truth is, the English people love high spirit combined with high rank. Whenever in assertions, even of unreasonable pretensions, a strong feeling of independence is expressed by a man of station and family, not only the multitude and his own party, but the whole community, are ready to applaud, and even his antagonists to respect and admire him.

The vacancy of [the] Lieutenancy in Bedfordshire in February, 1818, was occasioned by the death of my maternal uncle, John, second Earl of Upper Ossory, a man of taste and philosophy, to whom during childhood and youth I was beholden for tenderness and advice almost paternal, and who left me the estate and mansion of Ampthill<sup>2</sup>—a bequest munificent

<sup>1</sup> [Thomas Philip, third Lord Grantham (1781—1859), who succeeded his maternal aunt in 1833 as Earl de Grey.]

<sup>2</sup> [In Bedfordshire. The estate was sold at Lady Holland's death in 1845, and passed into the hands of the Duke of Bedford.]

in itself, and to me beyond all value, from the recollection of those who had inhabited it and of the happy hours, days, months, and years I had spent in their society.

Lord Ossory had not that force of mind which public life demands or creates, nor the habits of intense application to any object of ambition or vanity. He had too much respect, not to say awe, of the opinion of the world to make any strong or lasting impression; but he was far from being a common man. In all branches of taste his perceptions were quick and just, and on every question, private and public, his judgment was sound and his expression of it distinct and sincere. No less a person than David Hume predicted of him, when a young man at Paris, that he would distinguish himself as much as Charles Fox. Perhaps the very qualities which captivated that great philosopher, *viz.*, an unusual calmness of judgment, blended with some distrust of anything approaching to vehemence or enthusiasm, extinguished all ambition in Lord Ossory, and taught him to seek refuge in a tame and inglorious, but not unlettered or irrational, life in the country. He was, though not *ingenti percussus amore*, a genuine worshipper of the Muses, and far from insensible to the charms of literature or unskilled in the pursuit of many branches of natural philosophy. Not many days before his death, he, to my great satisfaction, expressed, with a warmth unusual in him, his approbation of the tone of indignation and scorn in which I had spoken in the Lords of the hypocrisy of the prosecution against Hone. Such testimony, from a person little disposed to palliate the excesses of the press or to sympathise in the exaggerations of a party, was a proof that Government had assumed

the attitude of hostility to the current of popular feeling. To that obvious error much subsequent discontent, as well as many difficulties we had to encounter for years afterwards, were mainly attributable.

During the Session of 1818, and especially on the Indemnity Bill,<sup>1</sup> I acquired by practice more fluency in public speaking than I had hitherto possessed, and got the ear of the House to a degree that placed me higher in the rank of speakers than I had hitherto aspired to be or perhaps could ever really deserve.

That Session commenced in January, 1818. The Ministers, questioned by me, announced an intention of repealing the Suspension Act<sup>2</sup> before the address was moved; and, on the motion of it, Lord Stanhope,<sup>3</sup> the very opposite of his father in political principle and greatly inferior in talent and knowledge, but, like him, suspicious and eccentric, delivered a speech, good in language but strange in conception, in which he lamented that the first sentence in Cæsar had not been made the leading article of the treaty of Peace (*Gallia omnis divisa est in partes tres*), and much of a like tendency and taste.

Lord Liverpool boggled at the epithet he should use in alluding to his oration, and after some hesitation designated it, as "certainly a remarkable speech." As Stanhope had called France "a conquered, abject, and despicable country," it made more sensation in Paris than London. It is said the French Ambassador remonstrated with Lord Liverpool for calling Lord Stanhope his "Noble friend." It hurried Lady Stanhope from France,

<sup>1</sup> [A Bill brought forward to indemnify various persons for apprehending and restraining those who had taken part in the late treasonable practices and unlawful assemblies.]

<sup>2</sup> [The suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.]

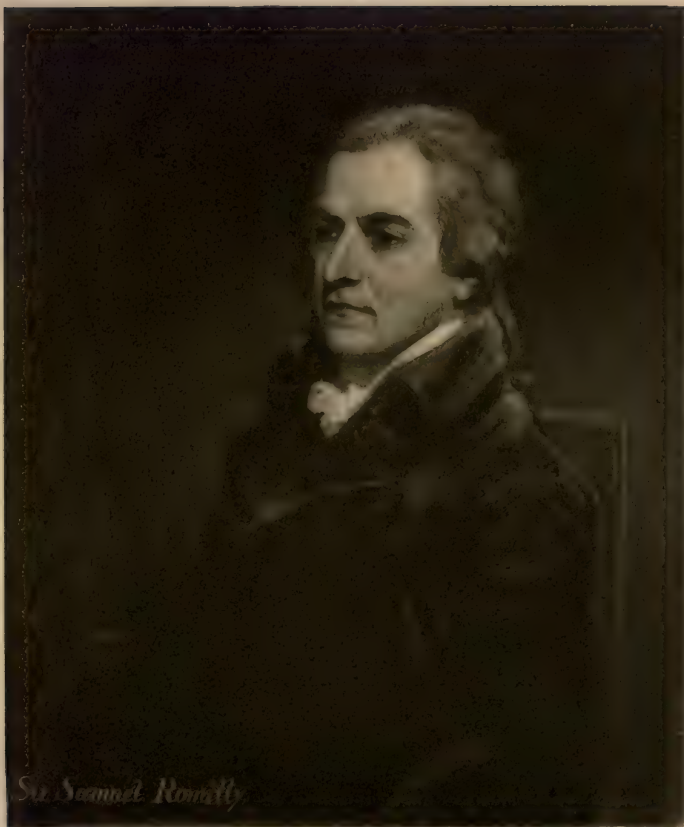
<sup>3</sup> [Philip Henry, fourth Earl of Stanhope (1781—1855).]



where she was then residing, and it required, according to rumour, the good office of friends, as well as some discreet compliances on the part of Lord Stanhope to which his nature had no particular repugnance, to protect him from all personal indignity from French bravos who would be patriots.

The earnest and repeated debates on the Indemnity Bill had some effect on the country, none whatever within the walls of Parliament. The divisions were bad, the Whig party dispirited and disunited. At the close of the Session some little spirit was raised on the renewal of that odious measure, the Alien Act. A method of evading its provisions, by purchasing stock in the Scotch Bank, under an Act of George I., was, at the instigation of Lord Lauderdale (the last expedient, I fear, his ingenuity ever exerted in favour of popular rights) resorted to by General Flahault.<sup>1</sup> A more factious attempt to defeat this manœuvre by an *ex post facto* clause, moved by Lord Melville, was baffled by myself and others prolonging the debate on the third reading in [the] Lords till the House of Commons was up. There was no time for getting through the formalities of agreement on our amendments without deferring the Commission and the Prorogation, and in the choice of disasters the Government submitted to the dreadful one of having a French officer a naturalised subject of the kingdom in which his wife was a native and a peeress. On this Alien Bill Sir Samuel Romilly had taken a very

<sup>1</sup> [The Act in question was one passed by the Scotch Parliament in 1695. It contained a clause, which constituted as naturalised subjects of Scotland any foreigners who held shares in the Bank of Scotland; and these were naturalised as English subjects by the terms of the Act of Union. The *ex post facto* clause seems to have been moved in the House of Lords by the Lord Chancellor, and not by Lord Melville, as stated by Lord Holland.]



*Sir Samuel Romilly*

*Sir Samuel Romilly*





prominent part, and on the ensuing dissolution he was chosen, against a virulent opposition both of Tories and Radicals, for Westminster: thus commencing to all appearance a career in politics as brilliant as that he had run in his profession. But all these expectations terminated in a scene of distress and horror, such as may, indeed, [have] been found in the theatre or in romance, but rarely in the tragedies of real life. His wife had died after much bodily suffering in the Isle of Wight, and he, being brought up with great difficulty to London in a state of deep melancholy, put an end to his existence two or three days after his arrival in Russell Square.

Mr. Dumont,<sup>1</sup> who accompanied him on his journey, and who endeavoured to relieve him by exciting his tears, told me that on being reminded in passing Holland House that his children were there, he betrayed some symptom of emotion, but rapidly relapsed into the deep depression of spirits which betokened his despair and should have admonished his friend of the consequences of it. It is singular, but true, that an epitaph recording the sudden death<sup>2</sup> (probably the suicide) of an uncle of the same name following that of his wife, was discovered on a tombstone in one of the churches of London.

Romilly was a man of strong sensibility and as strong opinions, indulgent even to tenderness to those he loved. He had neither vanity nor guile; but he was

<sup>1</sup> [Pierre Étienne Louis Dumont (1759—1829), Swiss author and tutor to the third Lord Lansdowne.]

<sup>2</sup> In Sir Samuel's MS. Memoir the following passage occurs: "Our family had been increased and enlivened by two female cousins, the children of my Uncle Isaac, who had been left orphans by the *premature* and almost *sudden death* of *both* their parents *within a few days of each other*."—V.H.

[No evidence can be found to support Lord Holland's statement that Sir Samuel's uncle also committed suicide.]

not perhaps entirely exempt from that gall which intense pursuit of an object engenders in a proud and ardent but pure and affectionate mind. His powers of reflection and reasoning were of the very highest order, and he was capable of unbounded devotion to a cause. There have been seasons and countries, in which the elements of which his head and heart were composed would have fermented into zeal and fanaticism. His early admiration of Rousseau, though afterwards checked by the practice of a subtle, discriminating, and distrustful profession on one hand, and counteracted by the more grovelling and selfish maxims of his friend Bentham on the other, had wellnigh moulded his genuine philanthropy into something of that shape and appearance, but did, in fact, leave nothing but the traces of gentle, refined, and over-nice sensibility and extensive philanthropy, more engaging and exemplary perhaps than practicable. Yet no advocate was more apt to persuade himself that his client's cause was the best in the world, and none certainly was more eager and earnest in enforcing that opinion. In spite of his great legal aptitude of understanding, he formed a striking and honourable exception to the pliability of principle so often and so justly objected [to] in our legal politicians. Far from being too temporising or too accommodating, he was more fixed and invariable in his private and public principles, on both great and small occasions, than is either common or convenient or perhaps desirable in a practical public man.

He has left memoirs of himself; I was permitted to read them in 1835.<sup>1</sup> The portrait, drawn by his own

<sup>1</sup> It has been published in this year, 1840, and edited with great judgment and taste by his children. The picture of so pure a mind or, as Lord Jeffreys happily expresses it, such serious sweetness in a first-rate man, delights everybody.—V.H.

pen, of a mind struggling with adversity and panting not so much for distinction or celebrity as for the reward of self-applause from an approving conscience, forms a valuable and curious piece of biography. Over-scrupulous tenderness for his memory induced his family for a time to withhold it from the public, a production which must raise his moral character and intellectual powers in the estimation of the good and thinking part of mankind. It was the project of Mr. Brougham and others to place him at the head of the party on the meeting of Parliament. It was defeated by the stroke of death. The inconvenience of a mixed and undisciplined band without any positive commander in the Commons was obvious; and our active friends in the House and the busybodies at Brookes' concerted an offer of the lead to Mr. Tierney.<sup>1</sup> Of this step Lord Sefton<sup>2</sup> and Lord Althorp<sup>3</sup> were, I think, the chief promoters, the members of the House of Cavendish the most earnest, and those of the House of Russell very willing and active supporters.

After some hesitation (for it was hardly in his nature to take any step without some previous hesitation or some subsequent misgivings) he accepted it. His oratory, though of no elevated, commanding, or even brilliant kind, was perhaps the most popular and the most agreeable, and certainly by far the most original, then left in Parliament. His long experience

<sup>1</sup> [Mr. Ponsonby, who had led the party since 1808, died in 1817. Creevey certainly thought little of Tierney's chances of success, and wrote that his life had been in "direct opposition to all Whig principles."]

<sup>2</sup> [William Philip, second Earl of Sefton (1772—1838), who succeeded to the title on his father's death in 1795.]

<sup>3</sup> [John Charles, Viscount Althorp (1782—1845); Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1830—1834. He became third Earl Spencer in 1834.]



of the House, his conciliatory temper, and above all his shrewdness, sagacity, and diligence seemed to fit him admirably for the station he thus assumed. It was, however, obvious that the general deference to his judgment and the confidence in his principles bore a very unequal proportion to the affection, good will, and delight, with which his conversation and speeches were regarded. Those who loved him best foresaw too clearly that in the essential qualifications of decision and judgment he might prove deficient, and those less aware than his intimate friends of his inflexible integrity not unnaturally attributed the low standard, at which he too frequently rated the public virtue of other politicians, to some crying defect in his own, although the real cause was the inordinate fear he felt of being outwitted and, above all, laughed at for presumption or simplicity.<sup>1</sup>

In truth, his irresolution was fed, if not engendered, by that very sense of humour which enabled him to discern so keenly and to expose so admirably whatever was ridiculous in other public men. His pleasantry and easy manners shed a charm over all intercourse with him, even on the driest matters of business and detail. He meant to be, and he was, courteous to all, and friendly and serviceable to his followers and partisans. He had, moreover, other qualities, or rather an exemption from other qualities, which seemed peculiarly adapted to win the affections of independent men. Though not destitute of spirit, and though his physical courage was redundant rather than deficient, he had perhaps less pride and certainly far less vanity than any man of equal talents and

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Fox, whose fearless and generous nature abhorred all refinement and suspicion, always undervalued Mr. Tierney's sagacity, and felt less confidence than he ought to have done in his professions and principles.—V.H.

acquirements whom I ever had an opportunity of observing. I must own, however, that in his capacity of leader of a party he was sometimes too readily offended at insignificant deviations, and disproportionately alarmed at the indiscretion of individuals. He was, in truth, always striving to be more circumspect in conducting other men than is compatible with preserving any authority over them at all; and yet by a contradiction not uncommon in the caution which has its source in timidity, he was occasionally so enamoured of some crotchet or refinement of his own that he was hurried into courses hazardous and even rash.

Little incidents and shades of differences at meetings held during 1819 at Burlington House,<sup>1</sup> and attended by most of the Whigs, but not by Mr. Lambton<sup>2</sup> (who had some private quarrel with Lord G. Cavendish), disconcerted Mr. Tierney exceedingly. He was much keener in discerning the existence and foreboding the consequences of accidental dissensions, unavoidable in large bodies of men, than expert in concealing and healing them; and the character of some members of his party, especially Mr. Brougham, was sure to bring these disqualifications into action and notice. They were, however, hardly perceptible to the public during the first part of the Session of 1819.

Several brilliant debates, in which he and Sir James Mackintosh shone greatly, and which were followed by successful divisions, though on matters of small importance, seemed fully to justify the choice which had fallen upon him and promised his leadership no little *éclat*. But debates under his guidance were too much trials of strength, and too little a manifestation

<sup>1</sup> [The residence of the Duke of Portland.]

<sup>2</sup> [Afterwards created Earl of Durham.]

of the conflicting principles of the parties engaged. He always laboured more to obtain wavering votes than to enforce the views or particular course of action recommended by his party. So enamoured was he of such a line of policy that, in an evil hour, he determined to bring the relative strength of Government and Ministry to a direct issue, and on May 18, 1819, he moved a Committee on the state of the nation—a motion equivalent to one for the dismissal of Ministry, and in the then state of parties justly remarked by Lord Castlereagh to convey two distinct propositions: the first, that the Ministry in office had *not*, and the second, that the gentlemen in Opposition *had* the confidence of the House. To neither of these propositions was the House, though far from satisfied with the state of public affairs, prepared to assent; and when convinced that the last was virtually involved in the first, did not hesitate to reject the motion by an overwhelming majority. Mr. Tierney was much disconcerted at this result, and it was not, I think, long ere he renounced the leadership which he had assumed.

The guidance of the party thus devolved to the guidance of three or four men of weight (such as Lords Althorp and Tavistock) and others stimulated by Brougham, or to that of chance itself. Parliament was prorogued in July, 1819. During the recess which followed frequent meetings were held in London and other populous towns. The avowed object was to petition against grievances and for Parliamentary Reform, and the representations of magistrates induced Lord Sidmouth, ever on the alert to flatter that consequential class of personages, to press for a sudden meeting of Parliament. His colleagues declined to adopt that inconvenient course. He redoubled his



activity in communicating with the busy magistracy and in impressing on their minds the importance of vigilance against riot and sedition. Hence, some from party spirit, and more from that pompous bustle in which provincial authority delights to revel, fed him with idle tales of plots and insurrections, and courted that official applause which he seldom failed to administer.

Atkins, the Lord Mayor, a foolish and violent man, at the risk of provoking a real riot, arrested a brawling parson of the name of Harrison in the very act of talking nonsense to a multitude.<sup>1</sup> This silly zeal was magnified as a feat of prodigious vigour and decision. Many a justice of the quorum waxed emulous of the fame of a Lord Mayor, who, according to his own version of the matter, modestly reported that he had defeated a conspiracy "to burn the Metropolis and to murder the inhabitants."

At Manchester the magistrates, instigated by one of the name of Fletcher, resolved to eclipse the triumph of Smithfield and arrest Mr. Hunt himself, the demagogue of the day, even before he had uttered a word. He substituted for constables a body of Yeoman Cavalry. They were suddenly let loose on a defenceless multitude of 4,000 men, women, and children to execute the warrant.<sup>2</sup> The crowd, unarmed, had collected in a square near St. Peter's Church. They were hemmed in by the soldiery, and on the slightest appearance of tumult would have been at the mercy of a military, but irregular and somewhat exasperated, force. As it was, excesses

<sup>1</sup> [The meeting was held at Smithfield.]

<sup>2</sup> [This must be a mistake. The number of people present was probably about 80,000. From twenty to thirty persons were wounded by sabre cuts, but the majority of the injuries were received by those who were trying to escape from the danger, real or imaginary.]

were committed and blood was shed, though more might well have been apprehended. The carnage was probably exaggerated, and could perhaps hardly warrant the designation, given of it to this day by the people, of the "Massacre of Peterloo." But it was an act of violence, odious, illegal, revolting, unprovoked, and unnecessary. This may be collected from a narrative in my possession, written by Mr. Stanley,<sup>1</sup> afterwards Bishop of Norwich, who surveyed the whole scene from the roof of the houses, and is much too conscientious a man to set down aught in malice, though less willing than many of his cloth to extenuate the excesses of authority. The intemperate eagerness, or, to use Lord Grosvenor's phrase, the breathless haste of the Home Office in thanking the magistrates for shedding the blood of the people before it had ascertained whether it was in observance or in breach of the law and the nature of the force employed, riveted the recollection of this outrage in the minds of the Manchester public. It rankled for many years. The consequences were very sensibly felt at the time of the Reform Bill; and the name of the "Massacre of Peterloo," together with those of the persons who were most forward in it, are not forgotten to this day.

The Parliament, however, as then constituted, had no sympathy with the sufferers; and when convened in November passed several angry and restrictive laws without repugnance and even without the formality of inquiry. The Whigs in the Lords resisted these unconstitutional laws in speeches and protests (several of which I wrote); but Lord Wellesley, who on recent occasions had taken a

<sup>1</sup> [Edward Stanley (1779—1849), Bishop of Norwich (1837), and father of Arthur Stanley, Dean of Westminster.]

popular view of all such questions, somewhat abruptly reverted to his old anti-Jacobin courses, and Lord Grenville vindicated the exercise of authority against democratic and tumultuous agitation with an earnestness and gravity which too plainly indicated an entire separation from the party with whom he had acted for fifteen years. His speech was elaborate and able—one of his best: and among the last he ever delivered. He touched with feeling on the differences subsisting between him and the reforming Whigs, and rescued himself with great spirit and close logic from all imputation of inconsistency, acknowledging and lamenting that he foresaw that practices would be resorted to and defended by the eager friends of liberty, to which he could never reconcile himself as compatible either with the institutions of the country or the preservation of necessary authority. It was, in short, clear that there subsisted a fundamental difference of principle between the Fox and Grenville schools of politics, and the course of events had brought into action these conflicting opinions.

This was virtually the close of Lord Grenville's public life, though he lived many years. It was painful that so honourable a career should end by a separation from many connected with and attached to him. The termination, however, like the course of it, was manly and direct. There was nothing sordid, nothing personal, nothing even inconsistent in it on either side. I, for one, feel that among the rare gratifications of a public life the reflection of having known and acted with such a man as Lord Grenville is not the least. Soon after a reluctant attendance on Queen Caroline's Bill and a speech upon it that added little to his reputation as an orator, logician, or judge, his health declined; he lived chiefly



in the country, and devoted himself almost exclusively to literature, philosophy, and gardening. I had the satisfaction of occasional correspondence with him on these topics, and also of giving his proxy for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts in 1828. He died in 1833.<sup>1</sup>

Non potui ejus mortem non dolere. Hominem enim, castum, integrum, et gravem cognovi.

Mr. Fox gave me his true character in one word, in 1805, when he said, "I like Lord Grenville very much indeed. He is a *direct* man."

The object of the early meeting being accomplished by the enactment of the Restrictive Laws, the Parliament was adjourned over the month of January, 1820. On the 23rd of that month died Edward, Duke of Kent. He, as well as his brothers, had been married on the suggestion of Government in the year 1818, with the view of securing the succession. The pregnancy of his Duchess, who was a Princess of Saxe-Coburg and widow of Duke of Leiningen, was announced early in 1819, when he and she were in Germany. They were desirous, for obvious reasons, that their child should be born in England; but the Prince Regent had no inclination to facilitate that object by offering any pecuniary assistance. They had not enough for their journey, and a generous loan of several thousands from Lord Fitzwilliam (not repaid, I believe, till Victoria's accession) extricated them from their dilemma. To that circumstance the present Queen and her subjects are indebted for the satisfaction of maintaining a native, as well as parliamentary and constitutional, sovereignty. The Regent, not content with the above gratification of malice rather than stinginess, perversely objected to the child, when born, receiving

<sup>1</sup> [January 12, 1834.]

the name of Charlotte. The Emperor Alexander was to be godfather. But the Regent discovered some rule of etiquette which forbade the combination of his mother's name with that of a foreign Crowned Prince. He wished the name to be Alexandrina, only from a spiteful hope that it might be unpopular; but such a design was successfully frustrated by that of Victoria being also adopted.

Living as we are, while I am writing this, under the Princess of that name, there may be some increased curiosity concerning the character her father bore among his contemporaries. I can furnish little to satisfy it, from such slight communication as I had personally with him, and I fear such report of his peculiarities as I can conscientiously repeat from others, will not augment any regret at an untimely death, which bequeathed to others the duty of forming the character of his far more illustrious daughter. His exercise of authority both in Canada and Gibraltar was liable to no exception on the score of negligence, but it was deemed so harsh and vexatious that it rendered his removal from both desirable.<sup>1</sup> His domestic life, though far from being dissolute or indecorous, was not exemplary nor abounding in any very amiable traits of disposition.

The state of the Royal Family at the period of Princess Charlotte's death had been singular enough. We had a King and Queen greatly advanced in years, and with no less than seven sons and five daughters alive, and all beyond forty years of age; and yet from the want of grandchildren there was no small prospect of the succession devolving on some foreign Prince.

<sup>1</sup> [The Duke of Kent was Commander-in-Chief in British North America, 1799—1800, and Governor of Gibraltar, 1802—1803. His death was caused by a sudden chill.]

While the means of supplying this defect by marrying the King's sons was in contemplation, it was, no doubt, remarked in every company throughout the kingdom that the robust frame and abstemious diet of the Duke of Kent marked him out as the survivor of all his Royal relatives then living. Yet he died before them all, leaving an infant daughter, destined to succeed to the Crown, in the cradle. He was, indeed, if such terms can agree, regular to excess in all his habits. Household and family were more strictly disciplined than a regiment or a convent, and the duties, the occupations, and the amusements of every branch of his establishment recorded, docketed, and preserved, with a minuteness I hardly venture to recount. His life was clockwork, and some ludicrous instances which his brother, George IV., loved to relate were such as might have rescued Sterne in his delineation of Mr. Shandy from all charge of extreme improbability. This observance of form and details, and above [all] this restless love of business which it caused, produced other results less creditable to his memory and far more vexatious to those connected or acquainted with him. It involved him in correspondence with many low characters of doubtful repute, and he was suspected (I fear with too much reason) of having indirectly countenanced and disseminated the calumnies, and even fomented the plots, against the Duke of York in the memorable business of Mrs. Clarke.

He certainly kept up a mysterious intercourse with almost every discontented officer in the army, and he is much belied if he did not secretly remunerate clerks in public offices, and inmates and servants in private families, for what he deemed curious information. It is to be hoped that he never earned, but



he certainly obtained from his brothers, the nickname of Joseph Surface : and the practices I have mentioned, combined with assiduous attendance at public dinners, a specious talent of speaking there, a plausible manner in society, and a formal and dignified demeanour everywhere, gave some colour to uncharitable imputations of very mischievous designs. Some certainly have thought it fortunate that he did not live long enough to dabble in the troubled waters, and prosecute the mysterious cabals which shortly after his death harassed and degraded the Royal family, and went nigh to disturb the peace of the country.

Of course, I do not allude to the horrid plot for murdering the Ministry, which was about this time conceived and nearly perpetrated by a ferocious enthusiast and resolute assassin of the name of Thistlewood.<sup>1</sup> That was detected and punished in the ensuing month, but had no countenance nor connection with any man of rank or indeed of public character whatever. But there were certain consequences resulting from the death of his father, in which the Duke of Kent, had he been alive, might have acted, if not a conspicuous, a very important part.

George III. expired on January 30,<sup>2</sup> the anniversary of the execution of Charles I., to whom he had been so often compared. It might have been expected that after a King had reached the age of eighty-one, and had been secluded for near ten years both from

<sup>1</sup> [Known as the Cato Street Conspiracy. The delinquents made preparations to murder the whole of the Ministers on February 23, when they had arranged to dine together at Lord Harrowby's house in Grosvenor Square. The plot was, however, divulged before the day, and the conspirators were arrested by the police and military when on the point of setting out to achieve their fell purpose.]

<sup>2</sup> [He died on January 29.]

affairs and society, nothing but a mere change of titles and names would have marked his descent to the grave. But his son who was actually possessed, as well as successor, of his prerogatives was so childishly averse to admitting of some formal consequences of the demise of the Crown that he involved himself, his Ministry, Parliament, and country in perplexity ; which diverted all attention from the real interests of the nation, threatened much internal disturbance and calamity, and ripened, if it did not sow, seeds of what fortunately became wholesome reforms, but might well have been confusion, vengeance, and disorder. The reports of all that led to, and all that occurred on, what is called the *Queen's Trial* are so voluminous and for the most part so correct, and the subject is altogether so revolting to good taste and so discreditable to the Government and the nation, that I may be spared the mortification and disgust of doing more than touching on such effects as it had on the state of political parties, and on a circumstance here or there relating [to] the individuals, which escaped the scrutinising curiosity awakened by that scandalous scene.

The Prince Regent had all along dreaded lest, on his Accession, the wife whom he detested would return to England, claim her dignity and station, and expose him to mortification and embarrassment. Long before his father's death he would willingly have instituted proceedings for separation and divorce. He was constantly nibbling at that bait, but he found no man of influence in his councils or in Parliament bold enough to engage in so hazardous an undertaking.

It was thought, indeed, by several that the Princess might be persuaded, cajoled, bribed, or intimidated into some deed of separation and a promise never to return. This would, it was thought, spare the Prince

her presence on his Accession, and his Ministers many embarrassing questions on which it would be difficult for *them* to steer a course, neither discreditable to their consistency and shocking to the sense of justice and decorum, nor, on the other hand, offensive to the King and fatal to their ascendancy at Court. Brougham was not at all unwilling to lend himself to such a scheme. With his usual confidence in his own dexterity, and with more than his usual effrontery, he obtruded some such suggestion on the Prince Regent and his Ministry, implying and much exaggerating his influence with the Princess. The basis of the arrangement was to secure to her an ample income and a recognition of rank and title on the demise of the Crown,<sup>1</sup> and to the successor to it the certainty and comfort of her perpetual absence.

Of these proposals he had consented, if not offered, to be the bearer. When reminded of it in the House of Commons, he did not simply deny it, but by vehement declamation and argumentative contradiction of collateral points endeavoured to involve all that had passed between him, his client, or the Government, in obscurity.<sup>2</sup>

How far he was authorised by her, how far invited or accepted by Prince Regent or Ministers to take the steps, it would perhaps be difficult for the parties themselves to explain, and is certainly so for the historian to ascertain. It all came to nothing. Some

<sup>1</sup> [She was not to assume at any time the rank and title of Queen of England.]

<sup>2</sup> This was not an unusual practice with him ; and as it was not only in speeches, but in correspondence, paragraphs, and pamphlets that he resorted to such contrivances, he was for such an effusion of ink not inaptly compared to the ink fish, who, to elude its pursuers, environs itself in clouds, or rather floods, of that dark and liquid composition.—V.H.



accused Brougham of a plot to betray his client and ingratiate himself with her enemies, others, of a wish to inveigle the latter into concessions and offers which would enable him to expose them afterwards and to place himself at the head of a popular party. Perhaps each side suspected him of such designs upon them respectively. Certain it is that though he repelled those charges with great ability and force, and some parts of them with obvious truth, yet there remained a strong suspicion on the minds of many that the entire failure of all agreement was mainly owing to the want of confidence, on both sides, in the honesty and judgment of the proposed agent (termed, by a bad joke, rather an *officious* than *official* adviser), and not from any reluctance on his part to make himself subservient to the views of either. Whatever was the effect of his interposition, nothing had been settled at the Accession of George IV.; and the Queen seemed retrospectively to approve of all Brougham's proceedings by appointing him without loss of time her Attorney-General.<sup>1</sup>

One of the first public acts which the King in the ordinary course of things was called upon to perform, was to sign an order for the omission of the names of the Prince and Princess of Wales, and for the

<sup>1</sup> [Early in April Lord Liverpool made the same proposition to Brougham as is mentioned on the last page, but raising her annual allowance from £35,000 to £50,000. This proposal, however, does not seem to have been communicated to the Queen, nor did she hear of it until it was communicated by Lord Hutchinson, on June 3, at Saint Omer, when on her way to England. She then entirely refused to consider the matter, and, continuing her journey, arrived in London on June 7. Negotiations were at once opened to persuade her to leave the country; but popular opinion was on her side, and she remained. Early in July Lord Liverpool brought in a bill in the House of Lords to deprive her of her prerogatives as Queen of England and to dissolve her marriage, but, finding it injudicious to persevere, dropped the whole affair in November.]

insertion of himself as reigning King, and Queen Caroline as his Consort, in the Liturgy. This he positively refused to do, and thereby astounded his Ministers. An altercation ensued, which had well-nigh ended in the dissolution of the Ministry. How exactly the matter was settled I do not recollect; but the Royal Family including the Queen, and not naming her, appeared in the *Gazette*, and the King, as the price of submitting to such a compromise, exacted from his Ministers a promise that unless the Queen were prevailed upon to remain abroad they would institute proceedings against her immediately on her arrival in England. It was, no doubt, foreseen by the King and by everybody else, the Ministers excepted, that the Queen would consider the omission of her name and title as an indignity, and hurry home to resent it. Even at this early period some vague and indistinct communications were conveyed from the King to leading individuals in Opposition. They betrayed the uneasy footing on which he stood with his Cabinet, and must have shown him the firm adherence of the Whig party to the public principles which they professed; but they did no more.

The King was proclaimed on a very cold day at Carlton House, by the same person (Sir Isaac Heard)<sup>1</sup> who had officiated at his father's proclamation *sixty* years before. The new Sovereign was so affected by the weather that he was near giving old Sir Isaac an opportunity of proclaiming a third King. His life, however, was saved by the bold practice of Sir Matthew Tierney, who resorted, without hesitation, to profuse bleeding.

The Parliament was dissolved on February 28, and the atrocious plot of Thistlewood and his accomplices

<sup>1</sup> [Garter King-of-Arms.]

was adroitly alluded to in the Speech as substantiating the grounds on which the Coercive Acts had been passed. Yet surely they rather confirmed the adverse remark, that penal laws and precautionary measures of severity against sedition tend to provoke schemes of assassination and to substitute the secret dagger for the open tumult or riot. There was nothing in the character or conduct of the criminals on this occasion to raise either sympathy or curiosity; nor could the fate of men meditating such atrocities excite the slightest commiseration. Yet the spectacle of the barbarous parts of the execution was unsuited to the times; and the Government and Parliament felt that they were more likely to disgust than to intimidate the public, and to promote than to deter disaffection and conspiracy. They were soon after silently abrogated by Act of Parliament in cases of high treason as well as felony, although the yet more iniquitous consequence of that sentence, the corruption of blood, was left unaltered.

Fortunately for the Ministry, the returns of the new Parliament were completed before the ulterior proceedings regarding the Queen were announced or the intentions respecting her had transpired or been clearly understood. Her resentment at the omission of her name was not positively known till Parliament met, and with equal good fortune the Civil List was voted before she arrived in the country, and before the discussions arising upon it had perplexed the House of Commons and inflamed their constituents. The dissolution had given the Government a majority adequate to ordinary purposes. The Civil List, having been settled as recently as 1816, and being in some degree exonerated by the death of Queen Charlotte as well as the King, passed rapidly and smoothly



through Parliament. Had the temper of the House been as much ruffled as it was six weeks afterwards, its passage would probably have been much rougher and much of its valuable cargo have been thrown overboard to lighten the vessel before it reached its destination.

The address also passed unanimously on April 17. There seemed, indeed, sufficient in foreign and domestic events to occupy the Parliament and the public during the Session. In Spain, insurrectionary movements and military mutinies had compelled the ever base and cowardly Ferdinand to proclaim that Constitution of 1812, which his treachery and ingratitude had subverted.<sup>1</sup> This revolution produced a mighty sensation throughout the Continent, and it was obvious either the infection of liberty would spread or an endeavour be made to crush it by the Holy Alliance and the restored Bourbons of France.

At home the great oracles on currency and bullion—such as that consistent and philosophical observer, Lord King—pronounced some legislative measures and some further approach to perfect liberty of trade and currency necessary to avert impending embarrassments, and to establish a wholesome condition of things. The trials of Mr. Hunt and Sir Francis Burdett, the first,

<sup>1</sup> [This Constitution was drawn up by the Spanish Cortes, in session at Cadiz in 1810—1812. Its aim and object was to limit the power of the Crown, and the deputies by their action showed their determination, without any actual disloyalty to the House of Bourbon, to strictly limit Ferdinand's power whenever he was successful in regaining the throne. On his return to Spain in 1814, Ferdinand's first act as King was to dissolve the Cortes and abrogate the Constitution, promising another in its stead. The promise, however, was never carried out, and, with all the old Royalist abuses springing up on every side, a veritable reign of terror ensued. In 1820 the standard of revolt was raised in Cadiz, and the movement spread throughout the country. The King at once gave way and restored the Constitution in its original form.]

for sedition and riot at Manchester,<sup>1</sup> the latter, for a seditious libel upon it, involved many questions on which the public, at any other time, would have been apt to take fire and some of a nice nature on the construction of Statute and the principles of Common Law. The Irish Roman Catholics, too, often over sanguine, began to speculate on the consequences of the Accession, and of a King who, though lately estranged from their cause, had been long supposed to be a friend, and might, as they fondly imagined, revert to his early predilections. Mr. Grattan, though in a feeble state of health, was hurrying over at their earnest instigation, and in fervent hope of closing his glorious career by a striking, if not successful, effort of expressing eloquence on behalf of his countrymen. But he breathed his last the day after he reached London, almost at the moment when the Queen's triumphant arrival extinguished for a time all interest about that great question more effectually than the death of its ablest advocate, overwhelmed the Government with consternation, adjourned all incipient reform on the business of Grampound,<sup>2</sup> and obliterated the consideration of all topics of public concern; thereby furnishing a beautiful comment on the institution of monarchy, which can render the personal and disgusting squabbles between a man and his wife, neither remarkable for their talents nor respectable for their virtues, a much keener object of solicitude to an enlightened people than the fate of surrounding nations or the improvement and welfare of their own!

Lord Grey did not attend the early part of the

<sup>1</sup> [On the occasion of the "Massacre of Peterloo."]

<sup>2</sup> [A bill to disfranchise the borough of Grampound, on account of the gross corruption which had there taken place.]

Session. He intrusted to me a petition from a parson of the name of Pike Jones,<sup>1</sup> a man of coarse manners, but not deficient in learning or understanding, whom the Bishop of Exeter, Dr. Pelham, the weakest sycophant on the Bench, had refused to induct to a living. The pretext was that he had spoken irreverently of the Articles and the Athanasian Creed at a public meeting; the real motive was to pay his court to George IV., by persecuting a clergyman who had at that meeting manfully and charitably maintained the principles of universal toleration.

My case was strong. I endeavoured, not without success, I believe, to demonstrate that were the Church of England to be judged, as the Anti-Catholics among them judge of the Papist, by such maxims and professions as she is unwilling to renounce but does not practically act up to, she might, through her Articles, Homilies, and Creeds, be convicted of bigotry, if not perhaps so extensive, full as inveterate and odious as that of the Roman Catholic Church. The Bishop, however callous to reproach, was scared at the severity with which several grave and church-going peers, especially Lord Carnarvon and Lord Lansdowne, stigmatised the transaction; and though the Bishop of Durham,<sup>2</sup> the highest Churchman on the Bench, censured the language both of Mr. Jones and Lord Carnarvon, it was obvious enough that he, as well as Ministers and the other Spiritual Lords, if compelled to pronounce a verdict on the subject, would have condemned his conduct as intemperate and illegal.

The Queen, with an intrepidity defying legal

<sup>1</sup> [John Pike Jones (1790—1857). He obtained the living of Alton, Staffordshire, in the gift of Lord Shrewsbury.]

<sup>2</sup> [Hon. Shute Barrington (d. 1826).]



advice as well as King, Cabinet, and Parliament, made a strange and triumphant entry into London, with Alderman Wood<sup>1</sup> at her side and her ladies opposite, on June [7], 1820. The Ministers redeemed their pledge to the King, and on the 6th brought down a message to Parliament, accompanied by papers in a green bag relating "to the conduct of the Queen since her departure." The negotiations preceding her determination to come to London were all brought in great detail before the public.

I have already stated my reasons for not recounting or commenting on them, or upon those, with a like failure, which were instituted by the Commons to induce Her Majesty to acquiesce in some arrangement which would avert the necessity of any public investigation. In some of the preliminary steps to the inquiry I took a part, with a view that the whole proceeding might be quashed in the earliest stages, and stifled without casting blame on either party. I was even induced, by an idle hope of abrogating an unjust and unnatural law (from which I apprehended future mischief to monarchy), to propose the Repeal of the Royal Marriage Act, which passed in the year 1772 to gratify the malice and feed the pride of George III.<sup>2</sup> I had no view, retrospective or immediate, to the squabble, then existing in the

<sup>1</sup> [Sir Matthew Wood (1768—1843), son of a serge-maker in Tiverton. Lord Mayor of London, 1815-16, and 1816-17. He was one of those who rendered pecuniary assistance to the Duke and Duchess of Kent and was made a Baronet by Queen Victoria soon after her accession.]

<sup>2</sup> ["By this Act, none of the descendants of George II., unless of foreign birth, can marry under the age of twenty-five, without the consent of the King; at and after that age, after twelve months' notice given to the Privy Council, they may contract such marriage, which shall be good unless both Houses of Parliament shall disapprove. (Hadyn's *Dictionary of Dates*).]

Royal Family and disturbing at once business of Parliament and the peace of the country ; but I vainly imagined that a sense of those inconveniences, arising from the constraints under which Royal marriages are contracted, might dispose men's minds to relax or remove such constraints in future. Friend and foe scouted the proposition, and seemed to suspect it to be a manœuvre to answer some immediate but concealed purpose. The fact is, all minds were intent on giving a triumph to one of the contending parties on the matter before them, and reckless of everything else. I, of course, let my bill drop after the first reading.

Lord Liverpool asked me in private if I would sit on the second Committee about to be appointed for an examination of the papers ; I declined, but I did so, as I told him, on private rather than public grounds, thinking my name by no means an advantageous one to be selected for judicial inquiry on a matter connected with divorce. Lansdowne consented to be named, but he afterwards publicly withdrew ; and as in the *interim* the Commons had shown their distaste and the public their resentment of the proceeding, his change of conduct, though judicious, natural, and prudent, was for that very reason, by the promoters of the measure, stigmatised as irresolute and unhandsome. Most of our party, and all who had been of Cabinet in 1806, were, in truth, at first very unwilling to espouse the cause of the Queen. We had no great confidence in its merit and none whatever in her character ; and we thought such a line of conduct would expose us to the charge of faction or revenge. On the other hand, we were as little disposed, after the treatment we had received, to identify ourselves a second time with the King,

and to brave unpopularity by encouraging him in an ungenerous and unnecessary vexation of a half-crazy woman.

Several, however, of our friends, Lords Donoughmore and Hutchinson, Sir John Leach,<sup>1</sup> Lord Lauderdale, and perhaps the whole Cavendish connection, either felt disgusted with the Queen or deemed it in their hearts a good opportunity for recovering Court favour, and possibly for outbidding those who were in possession of office. But some few in the Lords, very many in the Commons, and nearly all out of doors, wrought upon by Brougham and either sincerely biassed by indignation at what they deemed persecution or stimulated by faction and revenge, were panting for the exposure of the King and ready to exalt the Queen as their heroine and to inflict mortification and defeat upon him.

We were not the only party perplexed at the position we had assumed. Mr. Canning was in a yet more awkward predicament. He had been intimate, scandal said, too intimate, with the Queen. The rumour was countenanced by the King's marked aversion to him; and the notoriety of her consultations with him, before she quitted, had served to confirm the suspicion. Yet he had acquiesced in the exclusion of her name from the Liturgy. He did not appear either in Council or in Parliament to have made any very strenuous exertions to screen her from prosecution or aspersion. But when that provocation was determined and announced, he lamented it loudly, spoke in warm terms of his obligations and of the charms of her society. He asked an audience of the King, and stated to him the impossibility of

<sup>1</sup> [Sir John Leach (1760—1834), appointed Vice-Chancellor of England, 1818, and Master of the Rolls, 1827.]



taking any part in the proceedings against her. The King commanded him to remain in his service, but permitted him to state that he did so exclusively in consequence of that command, and allowed him to adhere to his resolution of taking no part. This he considered as a postponement of his resignation, which was tendered and accepted in the winter of 1820.<sup>1</sup>

Surely this was a strange course. It afforded her no assistance or protection. It must have grievously offended his colleagues and the King, and so far from rescuing her character from reproach, it seemed to imply some secret and mysterious reason that disqualified him for a judge or an accuser. . . .

In the meanwhile, the negotiations of the Commons with the Queen (though much to the mortification of Mr. Wilberforce and other grave members who conducted them, they ended in nothing) gave strong colour to the apprehension that, even if a bill of Pains and Penalties should pass the Lords, it would, by direct vote or by delay, be inevitably lost in the Commons. The thought of this animated and inflamed the public. Reports, perhaps unfounded, of murmurs among the soldiery were afloat.<sup>2</sup> They were said to confound the authority of a Queen with that of a King, and, conceiving them to be co-equal and co-ordinate, to imagine it left to their option which to obey. Certain it is that the lowest orders of the community and the fanatic sects of the middle ranks were both, for different and even opposite reasons, stirring partizans of the Queen.

<sup>1</sup> See his *Letter to a Constituent*, p. 537 of Chronicle, in *Annual Register*, 1820.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [Charles Greville says: "The military in London have shown alarming symptoms of dissatisfaction, so much so that it seems doubtful how far the Guards can be counted upon in case of any disturbance arising out of this subject."]

The clergy incurred great odium by their ready and over-zealous acquiescence in the views of a Court which was neither moral nor decorous. They could not disobey the injunctions of their superiors about the Liturgy; but their industry in disseminating the filthiest tales about the Queen and their haughty displeasure at every popular movement on her behalf, disgusted and irritated their flocks exceedingly. Never since the period of Charles I. were the English people so estranged from the Established clergy as on this occasion. Many useful reforms effected since, as well as many less sensible but not less certain symptoms of the declining influence of the hierarchy, may be traced to that epoch. They have been slowly and indirectly, but not unjustly, mulcted and reduced for abetting the petty malice, and conniving at the ill-assumed hypocrisy, of an unprincipled and revengeful Prince.

The report of the Committee of the House of Lords recommending a bill of Pains and Penalties was read on July 4, and Lord Liverpool presented the bill on the next day. It had been settled by an understanding, not, I believe, by a vote of the House, that Her Majesty's legal advisers, even though members of the other House, should be allowed to be heard and to conduct her defence at the bar; although members of the House of Commons are not usually admitted as counsel for or against any legislative proceeding. However, the whole proceeding was anomalous, and the counsel on both sides were members of Parliament. The proceedings on the bill were to be resumed, or as in common parlance it was described, the Queen's trial was to begin, on August 17, and on that day Parliament Street was lined by a crowd whose aspect was far more formidable than

their numbers. Unlike English multitudes, their countenances seemed to indicate design, determination, and revenge. They hissed some and applauded other peers as they passed; but they performed both those tasks with such marked indifference that it was difficult not to suspect that they had some more serious undertaking in view. One man quitted his companions, and, placing himself at the head of the Duke of Wellington's horse (as he was riding down to the House), clenched his fist, and repeated the word *Ney* three times with great emphasis and anger—an exclamation which surprised the bystanders exceedingly, and is said to have disconcerted the Duke himself not a little. Soon afterwards the railing which barricaded the street was broken down by mere pressure, and advantage was taken of this incident to augment both the military and the police. Owing to such precautions or to other accidents, the appearance of the people in the streets, though in numbers always considerable, gradually improved in character, and they became, as English mobs generally are, as manageable and good-humoured as at an election or a fair.

As I had taken some part in the preliminary discussions, chiefly to mark my disapprobation of so unusual, hazardous, and unnecessary a proceeding, so I voted for the Duke of Leinster's motion to rescind the whole and reject the bill without any inquiry at the bar. But during the inquiry itself, I was for the most part employed in writing nonsensical puns and epigrams on the various indecencies which occurred, and tossing them across the table to the Chancellor for his diversion, and I believe I was the only Lord practised in public speaking who asked not a single question during the inquiry. Once or twice, before the Order of the Day was read, I endeavoured, but in



vain, to rouse the attention of the House to the grave events passing in Europe. I also spoke on occasions which seemed to me opportune for dismissing the subject altogether, and I occasionally expressed my opinion on matters of form which arose in the course of it. Upon these latter points I acquired, chiefly during that period, a very undeserved reputation for a knowledge of the rules and orders of the House, which I do not possess. I have, however, frequently, though not perhaps without laughing or at least smiling in my sleeve, taken some credit for it, and availed myself of the delusion to facilitate public business or possibly to give a friendly party a lift. Form is so necessary in an assembly as large as the House of Lords is become, that perhaps where there is neither code nor individual vested with authority, it is pardonable to counterfeit more wisdom than one possesses and lay down some law in an authoritative tone. Lords of order, like yet greater beings, may be worshipped because some worship is convenient, rather than because their oracles are infallible.

Expedit esse Deos et, ut expedit, esse putemus.

Lord Grey earnestly wished to give to this bill all the outward dignity of an impeachment, and asked, on his legs, if there were not a more solemn way of voting than is usually practised on a division. I stated to him and the House that the regular and orderly, though generally neglected, method of taking votes on bills and motions much more nearly resembled that of taking individual judgments on a trial than from the common practice might be supposed. On a question being put, every Lord should in strict form be called, and should stand up in his place and say *Content* or *Not Content*, in the

same manner as he answers *Guilty* or *Not Guilty* in Westminster Hall on an impeachment. What was called a division of the House, by the *Contents* going below and the *Not Contents* staying within the bar, was a convenient device for ascertaining the number of votes *that had been given on each side*, but does not strictly or technically constitute the act of voting ; which was presumed to have been done in obedience to the injunction from the Woolsack, "Those who are for the motion will say *Content*, and those who are against it will say *Not Content*." The strict form was accordingly, on this solitary occasion, observed. We stood up and voted *seriatim*. We then divided, and were told, as usual, to ascertain the number who had said *Content* or *Not Content*. This proceeding, from the long disuse of it, was imposing enough ; and I not improbably owe the character and the authority of a profound Lord of order chiefly to the accident of having suggested it.

The questions on the various stages after the examination of witnesses were preceded by long debates. In the course of them I shortly stated my reasons against the form, expediency, or necessity of such a bill, but studiously avoided giving the character of a verdict of *Not Guilty* to that opinion. Others were not so cautious. Many on both sides displayed great subtleness and eloquence. But yet there was a certain lack of earnestness, sincerity, and truth in all that was said, and, in my judgment, individuals and parties, as well as our monarchy and institutions, appeared to sad disadvantage throughout the performance. It was a farce, and a sorry, disgusting, and dangerous one. The manner in which Lord Liverpool dropped the curtain after the third reading is well known. His pretext was that slender majority

of nine, which voted for that last reading, did not exceed the number of Cabinet Ministers who had already given a previous and extra-judicial opinion by advising the bill; but his real motive was a conviction that, if he persisted, the bill would be lost in the Commons, or, passing, produce some convulsion in the country.

The relinquishment of the bill was hailed almost instantaneously in the purlieus and adjoining streets with loud shouts of triumph. Within the walls there were, no doubt, many much mortified at so lame and impotent a conclusion; but, though some few protested, the Duke of Montrose alone ventured to raise his voice against an ignominious withdrawal of so grave and, as he thought, so well substantiated a charge. He acted honestly, no doubt. But as he had been by no means a pattern of purity in his youth, he could gain no credit for virtuous abhorrence of female frailty; and having been celebrated in verse and prose as a specimen of that brood which cackles around the Capitol, he must have hissed at the sorry catastrophe of the drama, more from aristocratical disdain of the low character of the paramour than from puritanical horror at the heinousness of the offence. However gloomy and even awful had been the commencement of the business, the fulness of the town at an unusual and agreeable season of the year, the entire close of business after four o'clock in the day, and perhaps some circumstances connected with the nature of the inquiry, rendered the period of its progress singularly festive and gay. Its permanent effect on the House was not so fortunate. It, in some degree, verified Lord Egremont's prediction that the habit of putting questions to witnesses would familiarise every block-



head to hearing his own voice in public, and he would hereafter weary the House with his silly remarks on various occasions. The Lords, if not more unmanageable, became from this period a more loquacious assembly than heretofore.

The King must have been sorely nettled at the result. He taxed his Ministers with pusillanimity, and sometimes affected to suspect them of treachery. He authorised various persons, such as Lord Donoughmore, Lord Hutchinson, Sir John Leach,<sup>1</sup> and others, to make half-confidences to Lord Grey, Lord Lansdowne, Mr. Tierney, and myself. If there was really any further design in such communication than to feel our pulse and alarm his Ministers at the possibility of a change, that design proved quite abortive. Lord Grey justly remarked in a letter, November 21, 1820, that it was impossible for the King and his Ministers to separate, however much they might hate one another.

The Queen's advisers and partizans, miscalling the cessation of all proceedings an acquittal, were busily endeavouring to set up her Court in rivalry to that of her husband. She gave dinners and had parties; but she had neither a case, a character, nor friends, to enable her to play that game with success; and some ladies of rank and character wrote their names at her door, or even on invitation dined at Brandenburg House, but none took office in her household. It was manifest that her station in fashionable society could never be made either brilliant or comfortable to herself or her visitors.

<sup>1</sup> An account of my conversations with Sir John Leach in June, 1820, may be found in a letter from me to Lord Grey, dated Holland House June 12, 1820, and a copy of it should be kept among the *Pièces Justificatives* of this work.—V.H. [See Appendix C.]

Whatever might be her failure in London society the agitation in the country continued. Numberless meetings were held, which passed petitions for the introduction of her name in the Liturgy, and pointed more or less directly to the removal of Ministers who advised the prosecution. If I may judge from the two which I was prevailed upon to attend—those of Bedfordshire and Oxfordshire—the enthusiasm in her cause had not abated in the country for several months after the failure of the bill. Yet perhaps in the course of the winter, and yet more manifestly during the early part of the ensuing year, the tide of popularity was on the turn. Her exhibition at St. Paul's and the King's re-appearance at the public theatres had very opposite effects. The first weakened the interest engaged in her cause, and the latter softened in some degree the displeasure felt against him. She, on November 29, proceeded to St. Paul's to return thanks and take the Sacrament. She thereby scandalised many religious persons, who deemed it a profanation of a holy rite, and she disgusted the indifferent, who regarded it as a piece of needless hypocrisy. The King, three months afterwards, mustered courage to show himself in public, and his reception at the theatres in February, though neither brilliant nor striking, indicated plainly enough that the popular frenzy was subsiding.<sup>1</sup>

All this preceded and accounted for the comparative flatness with which her subsequent endeavours to revive popular feeling at the Coronation, and even

<sup>1</sup> [Charles Gréville (*Reign of George IV.*, vol. i. p. 43) says: "*February 7.*—The King went to the play last night (Drury Lane) for the first time, the Dukes of York and Clarence and a great suite with him. He was received with immense acclamations, the whole pit standing up, hurrahing, and waving their hats. . . . A few people called out 'the Queen,' but very few."]

her death and funeral, with all their exciting circumstances, were received in the course of a short year from the period of her prosecution. The King's asperity was not so speedily mitigated as the people's disrelish of it; for when in the ensuing year the intelligence of the death of Napoleon, which arrived before the Queen was taken ill, was announced to him in the ambiguous terms—"I have, Sir, to congratulate you: your greatest enemy is dead," he unguardedly exclaimed, "Is *she*, by God?" thus betraying the gradation in which personal spite ranged above political enmity in his narrow and pitiful mind.

In 1820 died Sir Arthur Pigott,<sup>1</sup> a high-minded man and sound lawyer, who combined real philosophy with considerable eloquence, acuteness, and learning; and who, although in all exigencies, public and private, singularly serviceable to his friends and party, was too unobtrusive to acquire the celebrity to which his rare attainments and elevated mind certainly entitled him. His appearance was indeed uncouth; and both in figure and his face it was said that anatomists could trace affinity to the African race.<sup>2</sup> If so, he afforded practical proof that the narrow theory which denies capacity to that affectionate people is as erroneous as it is uncharitable. I have heard that, at an early period of his professional life, he had been a solitary instance of a contemporary or rival at the Bar unfairly treated by Lord Erskine. He was certainly among the many whom that extraordinary advocate, by bursting out into a sudden blaze, eclipsed and for a while seemed to extinguish.

<sup>1</sup> [Sir Arthur Pigott (1752—1819), Attorney-General, 1806—1807. He died on September 6, 1819.]

<sup>2</sup> The *tibia* in Negroes is said to be slight and slender; and the *os calcis* long.—V.H.



About the time of his death, Lord Erskine, who had involved himself in many embarrassments, pecuniary and domestic, was making the last exhibition in public worthy of his former fame. He moved on July 24, on the eve of the examination relating to the Queen, that a list of the witnesses should be forthwith delivered to the Queen to enable her to prepare her defence; but in his subsequent attempt to sum up the evidence he was interrupted in his speech by a loss of recollection, the consequence, as he thought, of sudden and severe illness. He recovered, however, to all appearance. The two or three years he survived added little to his happiness and less to his reputation.

Here then in 1820 closed his singular career, and here a friendly chronicler may feel pleasure in retracing the lines of his character. Few lives have been more useful to the laws of his country, and none more serviceable to his contemporaries, and, indeed, to the liberties of mankind, than Lord Erskine's. His wonderful exertions in the trials of 1794<sup>1</sup> stemmed the torrent of political violence, which was rapidly rising. In my conscience I believe, that had Horne Tooke and his associates fallen victims to a charge of constructive treason, it would not have been long ere the first men in the country, and among them perhaps the very individuals who instituted the proceedings, would have followed their fate; for a system of political vengeance and persecution as merciless, though in an opposite direction from Robespierre's, would have been inevitably established. From such scenes I believe we were protected chiefly by the successful genius of Erskine. His character was as

<sup>1</sup> [Those of Hardy, Horne Tooke, Stone, and others, for conspiracy to raise a rebellion.]

extraordinary as his career. Who ever attained so suddenly such celebrity at the Bar? Who ever held it longer? Who owed it more undeniably to brilliant talents and amiable virtues? Who, above all, ever exercised in that profession such superiority, with such uniform amenity of manners, such magnanimity to young and old, to inferiors and followers, to equals and rivals—in short, to all who approached him?

In a career whose very essence is contention, it is marvellous how little angry passion of any kind he either betrayed or provoked. His triumphs (and who had more?) wounded nobody. His disappointments (and he had his share) never fretted and hardly ruffled him. It is said he has left memoirs of his early and professional life. If they relate exclusively to passages in his professional career (to which I earnestly exhorted him to confine himself), they will be not only curious but invaluable. If they embrace politics and private life, they must, I fear, disappoint the world; and they will certainly surprise and divert rather than instruct or enlighten his readers. Yet he was a clear and pleasant writer, when the subject he treated of was such as suited his powers. Even in politics, in which he was anything but sedate or wise, what was miscalled his failure in Parliament should not have occasioned a neglect of his printed speeches. They were often very finished performances; but those delivered at the bar, and afterwards edited by himself, are absolute models of forensic eloquence. They abound in beauties. They have pathos, vehemence, wit, and fancy, and, above all, an originality of mind which they who knew him little and late could hardly imagine to have been in him. Truth is, he was a phenomenon throughout.

Well might Mr. Robert Smith say that he knew not why God Almighty should have been at the pains of making a *nisi prius* lawyer, but he certainly had been and succeeded, when Erskine was formed. Vain even to a proverb, he seldom, very seldom, mortified the vanity, and he *never* grudged or envied the success, of any other man.

Destitute of all classical education, and consequently debarred from all familiarity with the great models of poetry and oratory, he was yet remarkable in public and private for the taste and purity of his diction. After serving in two active professions, the Navy and the Army, and speaking broad Scotch at the age of 22, he, in the course of five years from that time, was scarcely more distinguished for any other branch of oratory than the grace of his delivery and the beauty and correctness of his elocution. His sagacity and discretion *in a cause* were unrivalled, but they scarcely exceeded his levity and impudence *out of it*. His judgment and dexterity in other men's affairs equalled, but it could not surpass, his simplicity and childishness, not to say silliness, in the management of his own. No one gave him credit for much sensibility or very strong affections. Yet the zeal, the earnestness, the energy, with which he espoused the interests of a client, the light-hearted playfulness with which he enlivened the gravest deliberations, his sweetness of temper and gracefulness of manner, made him a welcome associate in all companies and the intimate friend of some of the wisest and best of his contemporaries. His public principles were unquestionably of no very inflexible kind. They had, perhaps, never been very deeply considered, and yet honour or accident, the recollections of early life, and an unaffected deference for the more comprehensive



genius of Mr. Fox, which, vain as he was, he never disputed or regretted, rendered him one of the most consistent party men of our days, at least, among those who from lawyers have become politicians.

In short, in drawing his character one might go on with one endless antithesis ; and it is not the least remarkable circumstance about him that, in spite of apparent contradictions in his composition, there scarcely ever was a man on the great theatre of the world about whose qualities, moral and intellectual, all persons and parties were more generally agreed. I have chosen to close his character here, for there was nothing in the last years of his life on which a friend could dwell with any satisfaction, though there was nothing on which a biographer or historian could be called upon to dilate. He died in very embarrassed, not to say indigent, circumstances in 1823.

Though the Session of 1820, of which I am now speaking, was engrossed with the Queen's business, time was found by the Ministers to pass an Act for continuing that odious and unconstitutional law called the Alien Bill. I did my best, but in vain, to rouse some feeling against it. I was left in a minority of seven. On the other hand, a just and necessary amendment of the Marriage [Act] was, after some discussion, lost in the Lords,<sup>1</sup> though the earnestness and home truths of Lord Westmorland and the eloquence of Lord Ellenborough in its favour made an impression which ensured some success in that work of mercy and justice on a future occasion.

But though the legislation of this country was torpid during 1820, the Continent of Europe was not

<sup>1</sup> [A prospective and retrospective clause to prevent the annulling of marriages on slight informalities previous to the solemnisation. (*Annual Register*, 1820).]

so inert. The Spanish Constitution of 1812 ran like wildfire through the south of Europe.<sup>1</sup> It was proclaimed at Naples, where no copy of it was to be found, and within a month it was adopted in Portugal likewise. The Emperor of Russia and the other members of the Holy Alliance were not unmindful of these events. They signified their apprehension of such revolutionary movements, and, obliquely threatening some efforts to suppress them, called on their Allies to meet at Laybach to take the state of affairs in Italy into serious consideration. Accordingly, at the commencement of 1821, and on the opening of Parliament in January, the Government and the two Houses seemed once more occupied with questions affecting the interests of Europe. They were, indeed, diversified by the county meetings praying for the restoration of the Queen's name to the Liturgy, to which I have already adverted.

The Duke of Wellington began to take a greater part in debate than hitherto, and, I suspect, in Council, too,

<sup>1</sup> [The Revolution at Naples, fostered by the secret society of the *Carbonari*, attained its object without serious difficulty. King Ferdinand, who had been restored in 1815, accepted the Constitution as proposed to him, though in a letter to the Emperor of Austria he protested that he had done so under constraint.]

The Portuguese Royal Family were still in the Brazils; and the rising planned to obtain an amendment of the Constitution took place at Oporto in 1820. It is worthy of note that Marshal Beresford and the other English officers who had assisted the Portuguese against the French were sent out of the country.

The Treaty of the Holy Alliance had been concluded during the negotiations for the second Treaty of Paris in 1815, at the instance of the Czar of Russia. The other signatories were the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia, their object being to maintain the peace of Europe by a system of collective diplomatic pressure and intervention. Great Britain had refused to become a party to the Treaty, as her representatives, though cordially concurring in the desirability of these views, considered them visionary and impracticable.]

after Mr. Canning had withdrawn. In a speech in the House of Lords he ventured on a paradox which shocked the friends of freedom exceedingly. He maintained that open public meetings were an absolute farce, and pretended that resolutions and addresses got up in private, which had been pretty generally resorted to with a view to counteract the impression of those voted in public, and which were much branded as hole-and-corner petitions, were more deserving the attention of Parliament.

Mr. Canning, who had absented himself while the Queen's Bill was pending, actually resigned in December. He had received the King's permission to do so. It may be said to have been matter of agreement with him and the King, as appears from a letter written by him to one of his constituents.<sup>1</sup> But the publication of that letter was not agreed to or permitted, and gave His Majesty much umbrage. So much so, that Mr. Canning was obliged to explain and to accuse the poet Campbell, in whose magazine it first appeared,<sup>2</sup> of a breach of confidence or, at least, of discourtesy for printing it without his authority. It is possible that Mr. Canning's retirement from the Cabinet at that critical moment in some degree facilitated the measures of the Holy Alliance, who then or shortly afterwards determined to trample on the rising liberties of Italy, and succeeded in their iniquitous projects through the pusillanimous treachery of the King of Naples and the irresolute, if not insidious, connivance of the French and English Cabinets.<sup>3</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> [Chronicle, *Annual Register* of 1820, p. 537.—V.H. [Also see *ante*, p. 286.]

<sup>2</sup> [The *New Monthly Magazine*.]

<sup>3</sup> [The first meeting of the three great Powers composing the Holy Alliance took place at Troppau in October, 1820. The sovereigns circulated a manifesto to the great European Powers stating their



is true, however, that Lord Liverpool and Lord Castlereagh, both in speeches and public papers, unequivocally disclaimed all participation in the proceedings against Naples, and all sanction or approbation of the principles of the Congress of Laybach.

Their efforts, however, to prevent the interference they thus affected to lament were very faint indeed, and their distribution of naval force, far from impeding, seemed to assist the views of the Holy Alliance. It was, however, confidently asserted by some well-informed persons that it was the real wish of the Duke of Wellington, and yet more of Lord Castlereagh, even at that time to discountenance all armed interference with the revolutions of countries nominally independent. Some even maintain that had the negotiations remained in the hands of Lord Stewart, the present Lord Londonderry,<sup>1</sup> the aggressive measures against Naples would never have been resorted to. Accident or personal caprice occasioned Lord Stewart's absence at the time; and the conduct of the affairs devolved on Robert Gordon,<sup>2</sup> who, deeply imbued with his

views on intervention, and invited the King of Naples to meet them at Laybach. The Congress was held in January, 1821, and Lord Stewart, the British Ambassador at Vienna, represented Great Britain. King Ferdinand, whose absence from Naples was only permitted on condition that he renewed his oath to preserve the Constitution, renounced all his engagements on his arrival at Laybach. The Congress decided to restore the King by means of an Austrian army, and successfully carried out their design. Great Britain and France remained neutral on this occasion, but issued no protest against the action of the Powers.]

<sup>1</sup> [Charles William, third Marquess of Londonderry (1778—1854), half-brother of Lord Castlereagh. No mention is made by Sir Archibald Alison of his absence from Laybach.]

<sup>2</sup> [Sir Robert Gordon (1791—1847), diplomatist, son of George, Lord Haddo, and brother of George Hamilton, fourth Earl of Aberdeen.]

brother Lord Aberdeen's predilection for the Austrians, was easily cajoled by their arts to depart from the spirit of his instructions.

George IV. no doubt rejoiced in secret at the failure of any endeavours to check the anti-revolutionary intervention of Austria; and is it uncharitable to surmise that a Cabinet, weakened in numbers, talents, and popularity by the secession of Mr. Canning and by the unsatisfactory results of the proceedings against the Queen, were disposed to pacify the King by injurious compliances with his passions, or at least by the faintness of their resistance to his ruling prejudices and prepossessions?

In February and March there were many animated debates on these topics. In the course of them I took an active and, as some thought, an intemperate and imprudent part. In one of them, when called to order by Lord Harrowby, I disdained to have the appearance of qualifying by finishing my sentence as I had intended; and, so interrupted, it seemed to charge the Emperor Alexander with a participation or at least connivance at the murder of his father, whereas my meaning was to utter a much less disputable, as well as less offensive, allegation, namely, that it ill became him to charge those who derived their power from insurrection or mutiny with being necessarily accessories after the fact to the perpetration of a crime, for he was himself sitting on the throne reeking with the blood of his own father, and would consequently, by a parity of reasoning, be exposed to the unfounded or, at least, questionable imputation of being cognisant of and responsible for the murder. The diplomatic agents of Russia felt or affected great indignation. Up to the period of Alexander's death they pointedly avoided my society.

It was whispered that Count Lieven,<sup>1</sup> a very gentlemanlike man, had some thoughts of making it a personal quarrel; and my old friend Pozzo di Borgo soon after, at Paris, though not unwilling to meet me, conveyed his regret that he could neither exchange visits nor invite me to his house.

I was in France for five or six months in the summer of 1821; but before I set out, I had the satisfaction of getting an act through Parliament, which in turbulent times may have the beneficial effect of saving the lives of many persecuted and obnoxious men. Availing myself of an admission of Lord Eldon that the laws relating to treason should be alike in all parts of the United Kingdom, I pointed out to him the fact that the just and benevolent statute which requires two witnesses to an overt act of treason was not in force in Ireland; and that men there, in our own time, had been convicted and executed on the testimony of one only. He promised not to oppose a bill to amend this defect; and when I introduced it, [it] glided almost imperceptibly through both Houses of Parliament, to my great satisfaction. Is it vanity to say that when one has succeeded in enacting such an improvement one feels that one has not lived in vain, and that one has done something to rescue from reproach that anomaly which confers for birth alone an undue share in making laws for the community to which one belongs? The bill for the relief of Roman Catholics, having passed the House of Commons, was thrown out in the Lords.

I soon after went to France. Such English intelligence as reached me there may be better found in Parliamentary Reports, *Annual Registers*, and other printed works. To them I refer my reader. He will,

[The Russian Ambassador in England.]



no doubt, remark in the debates [on] the Grampound Enfranchisement Bill the gradual but sure tokens of a rising statesman and philosopher in Lord Russell, and in the measure itself the progress of the principle of Reform in the public, as well as some indication of the effects likely to be produced on that question by the shortsighted resistance of the High Tory party to every improvement, however small.

The death of Napoleon was one of the events of this year. The manner it reached me, and many other particulars relating to that extraordinary man, are recorded in a separate book of this work, and require no repetition here.<sup>1</sup>

The Queen's attempt to force herself into the presence at the Coronation was unsuccessful and undignified. It outraged the feelings of the country, and was deprecated by a large portion of her friends and advisers. Even Sir Robert Wilson, not the least zealous or rash of her counsellors, vehemently protested against it, and absented himself purposely on the occasion. The imputations cast upon him afterwards of planning a mutiny and insurrection were utterly groundless. He was at Paris when news of her death and the projected procession arrived, and he consulted me on the propriety of attending it, after having so recently parted with Her Majesty on a difference respecting her attempt to appear at the Coronation. That gorgeous ceremony, though far less gratifying to the people than those which have subsequently occurred, was lavishly expensive and splendid; but it was very pernicious in its effects both on the Royal and the public mind. George IV. acted the farce of deriving his authority from Heaven with so much complacency that he

<sup>1</sup> [*Foreign Reminiscences.*]

almost persuaded himself that it was true, and the people, though hardly the dupes of such mummery, surrendered their better judgment and more reasonable feelings of distrust to the glitter of pageantry and show. To disseminate this disposition for parade the King exhibited himself shortly afterwards in Ireland, and even in that nation, whose wrongs he was so intent upon perpetuating, found a gentry and a populace base enough to greet his arrival with shouts and adulation. So predominant is a childish love of Princes in all parts of the British dominions.

It was during his absence on that excursion that Queen Caroline died. The death of this luckless Princess, the consequence of an accidental obstruction in her bowels, was rather a relief than loss to all parties in the State. The King was overjoyed, the Ministers pleased, and perhaps those hitherto politically and professionally connected with her were, on reflection, not sorry at the event. Few could have adhered to her Court without either discredit or disadvantage, and yet none could have held entirely aloof without incurring the imputation of base servility to the King and great want of generosity and feeling. To none was the release greater than to Mr. Canning. It did not entirely efface the resentment of the King against those who had espoused her cause, or those, including the Ministers, whom he thought had by mismanagement given her a triumph; but it removed the object which perpetually reminded him of his mortification, as well as all occasions which might revive his wrath.

## MISCELLANEOUS RECOLLECTIONS

### A SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER

BEGUN IN 1826

**I**N one supplementary chapter to my Memoirs I have endeavoured to preserve the recollection of such foreign anecdotes and personages as accident, credible report, or personal observation have brought within my knowledge. In this, I propose to set down whatever I have learnt worth commemorating concerning those persons who, whether Englishmen or foreigners, have during my time, without immediate connection with politics, acquired or deserved celebrity for genius or talent, learning or wit, in science, in art, in poetry, in literature, or in conversation. With some such I have been intimate, with many others familiarly acquainted. All have, no doubt, had directly or indirectly more or less influence on the taste, temper, and opinions of society. The indistinct manner in which it was exerted would not, indeed, justify the introduction of their names in my narrative of party contentions and political events; but some traits of their characters and lives may not be misplaced on the distant ground of the picture I have attempted to trace. I do not, however, pretend to much accuracy of research, nor do I aspire to the office of biographer of my contemporaries; still less am I qualified to become the historian of literature, arts, or sciences.



Mine are notes and reminiscences of an idle, and in some senses ignorant, spectator. They are rambling, desultory, and imperfect, and often more calculated to raise than to satisfy curiosity. But they are true; they relate also to subjects which, having afforded amusement and instruction to the writer in the course of his life, may possibly prove neither unpleasing nor uninteresting to some reader of similar habits and taste after its close.

Though from my family connections I was during my childhood and early education in the habit of seeing many of the leading characters in fashionable and political life, yet I remember meeting but few men of literary celebrity. The truth is, that at that period they were less blended in society with men of business and pleasure than they have been of late years. There was perhaps as much reading, but there was less conversation about books. If equal homage was paid to authors of genius, the intercourse between that class of men and fashionable company was infinitely less than has since been established, to the credit, and I should hope to the advantage, of both. Of course there were exceptions. Some few, like Horace Walpole, Gibbon, Soame Jenyns, Sheridan, and Tickell, had at different epochs of their lives partaken of the character of both. Some others, who from birth and early habits might be deemed to belong to one class, from taste or choice studiously devoted themselves to the other. I had from the earliest youth great curiosity about men remarkable for their literary attainments. My vanity and taste were always gratified by any intercourse with them,

*Quotque aderant vates rebar adesse Deos.*

Hence I was flattered by occasionally visiting Horace

Walpole in London and at Strawberry Hill, at one or two letters I received from him, and at the notice he took of me when I met him in houses which he habitually frequented. His conversation, like his written compositions, displayed a sprightly mind and a memory stored with anecdotes, historical and literary, the result of much antiquarian research and the fruit of a long life spent in the company of statesmen, authors, artists, and wits. In his person he was slender and prim, in his manners extremely artificial, in his temper somewhat susceptible about trifles. His conversation, though much enlivened by fancy and epigram, had great marks of preparation and study, and even effort. These circumstances made Lord Ossory observe in some MS. notes that, "Walpole fell far short of his friend, George Selwyn," who, let me add, was a friend somewhat unmerciful on the taste and appearance of Horace Walpole, describing Strawberry Hill to me as a catacomb, or at best a museum, rather than a habitation, and the master of it [as] one of the most carefully finished miniatures and best preserved mummies in the whole collection.

But whatever were his peculiarities, Walpole's published and unpublished works are mines which abound in brilliant, and do not fail in solid, materials for history and biography. No one employed as I have been in editing and, as I now am, in imitating his labours,<sup>1</sup> can seriously wish to disparage one whom he shows himself willing and perhaps unequal to copy and to emulate. The scandalous chronicle reported him to be son of a Lord Hervey.<sup>2</sup> In affected

<sup>1</sup> [Lord Holland published in 1822 Horace Walpole's *Memoirs of the Last Ten Years of the Reign of George II.*, and prepared his *Memoirs of the First Ten Years of George III.* This latter work was published after his death by Sir Denis Le Marchant in 1845.]

<sup>2</sup> The elder brother of that famous wit, courtier, and infidel, who

humour, laborious application to trifles, occasional and unprovoked malignity, and whimsical ingenuity of understanding, he certainly bore some resemblance to that family. He felt, or pretended to feel, great disgust at the practice adopted by the bookmaking admirers of Johnson, who scrupled not to commit to print whatever they heard in private conversation. Hence he would suddenly purse up his mouth in a pointed but ludicrous manner whenever Boswell came into the room, and sit as mute as a fish till that angler for anecdote and repartee had left it. It is more than probable that he dreaded and disliked Dr. Johnson himself. Whig principles, Republican affectations, and loose notions of religion, were all likely to invite an attack; and I much suspect that Walpole practised some artifice or resorted to some meanness to elude the notice or disarm the hostility of that formidable enemy of fashionable philosophy. In conversation and private correspondence, as well as in his posthumous works, he was by no means sparing of sneers and sarcasms on the priesthood and the Church. I well remember that, on the publication of *The Microcosm*,<sup>1</sup> Lady Ossory enclosed to me a letter she had received from Horace Walpole, in which he humorously but earnestly exploded a prevalent notion that the juvenile authors were assisted by the masters. Walpole urged the incapacity, ignorance, and sycophancy of the tutors and parsons in terms highly offensive to clerical ears. I, in truth, did not under-

is satirised by Pope under the names of Sporus and Lord Fanny, who fought a duel with Pulteney, corresponded with Mr. Middleton about the Roman Senate, was a favourite of Queen Caroline, and died 1749.—V.H. [He died in 1743.]

<sup>1</sup> [An Etonian publication, which was first brought out in 1786. The chief contributors were Bobus Smith, Canning, and Hookham Frere. See p. 314.]



stand the force of many of his allusions ; but, vain of possessing the handwriting of an eminent wit, ran to communicate the panegyric of my schoolfellows to my tutor, Dr. Langford. He, though "Etonian to the backbone," was far from relishing such a compliment to the scholars, but, nettled at the irreverence or truth of the remarks, made me feel that I had not risen in his favour by becoming the depositary of so heterodox a document.

Walpole's conjectures were not, however, unfounded, nor his sarcasms unmerited. The fellows, masters, and tutors were in my time, a period of nearly ten years, singularly deficient in common sense and experience, and by no means distinguished even in that narrow path of learning which they are expected most earnestly to pursue. Dr. Goodall<sup>1</sup> was perhaps an exception to the last clause of this censure. He was a showy scholar and quick man, but with as little usage of the world or solidity of judgment as his colleagues. I was diverted, when I met him at our Ambassador's many years afterwards, at the good-humoured simplicity with which he acknowledged what had delighted him most in Parisian society. It was, forsooth, the precedence given to the Nuncio, the red stockings, imposing dress, and dignified carriage of an ecclesiastic, who from perhaps a pedagogue like himself had risen to be a diplomat and a Cardinal, and walked before nobles, generals, and Princes. Dr. Roberts,<sup>2</sup> the Provost, who for a short time had been tutor to Mr. Fox, was something more of a literary character. He had published a

<sup>1</sup> [Joseph Goodall (1760—1840): Assistant Master at Eton, 1783; Headmaster, 1801; and Provost, 1809.]

<sup>2</sup> [William Hayward Roberts, D.D; appointed Provost of Eton in 1781, and died in 1791.]

volume of verses, and was supposed to have assisted Dr. Glynn<sup>1</sup> (an abler man than himself) in his Seatonian Prize on the Day of Judgment, which is a poetical composition of unquestionable merit and full of happy imitations both of Milton and of Virgil. I suspect, however, that Dr. Roberts is now better remembered in "Colleges and Halls" for a speech to the King, highly characteristic of his profession, than for the truth or taste of his poetry. In thanking

<sup>1</sup> For a long time Resident Senior Fellow of King's College. He had taken an active part in the Chatterton controversy, and maintained to the last the authenticity of the poems. I knew nothing of him but his appearance. That was not prepossessing. He had the reputation of a saturnine and sarcastic wit, but was known by his intimates to conceal a very warm heart under that rugged exterior. He it was who said of Porson, that it was "a pity so much wit should be in a fool's keeping." Mr. Smith (Bobus) related an incident which occurred when he was sitting with him in his study at King's, and which, as it illustrates his whimsical character and at the same time redounds to his credit, may be worth repeating. They heard a strange noise and clacking on the staircase, which, when followed by a knock at the door, greatly discomposed the morose old bachelor. However, he exclaimed with a resolute voice, "Come in," and an ill-dressed old country-woman, with a magpie on her wrist, made her appearance. Glynn, it seemed, from charity had frequently, and ultimately with success, visited her sick daughter gratis at a distance from Cambridge, and the grateful old goody had trudged over from the fens with the only remuneration her slender means could supply, *viz.*, "her favourite magpie." The studious Doctor was appalled at the prospect of so troublesome an inmate, and yet unwilling to mortify the kind feelings that had brought him. So, after sundry gesticulations and grotesque exclamations of "Pretty Meg," "Charming bird indeed," he archly and good-humouredly said, "Thank ye, Dame, thank ye from the bottom of my heart. I like the bird vastly; I enjoy the present exceedingly. And now I'll tell you what you shall do; you shall board it for me at half a crown a week, for I know you will take care of it, and mind you do: but I should be called out to my patients and neglect it."—V.H.

[Robert Glynn (1719—1800), physician. He was a firm believer in the authenticity of the *Rowley Poems*, and bequeathed the originals, at his death, to the British Museum. These poems are now undisputably known to be the work of Thomas Chatterton, the youthful genius who poisoned himself at the early age of eighteen in despair at his poverty and the ill success of his forged essays and verses.]

His Majesty for his Provostship, he added, "And I am the more sensible of the favour conferred, Sir, as it is tenable with any other preferment."

Among the fellows was a Dr. Barford,<sup>1</sup> who passed for a great scholar. I could never discover on what his reputation was founded, except a Greek translation of Gray's *Elegy*. The boys affirmed that he could read a newspaper off-hand into classical Greek, a common hyperbole to express a scholar's familiarity with that language. George Selwyn used the same to me of his Master, Dr. George: he added that he knew the Greek for every English word except *Mutton cabobbed*, that he had taught his wife also many words, but that he reproved her for using them ungrammatically, as, when in playing whist she said, "I lead *ὁ βασιλέυς*," he would turn up his eyes and earnestly exclaim, "*τὸν βασιλέα, τὸν βασιλέα, my dear.*"<sup>2</sup> I know not why I repeat so silly a story, especially as I cannot vouch for its truth. I might, however, have asked the lady herself, for I remember seeing

<sup>1</sup> William Barford, D.D. (d. 1792).

<sup>2</sup> Dr. George, however, seems to have been an elegant scholar, and a good writer of Greek and Latin verse. Some of the best specimens in the *Musa Anglicana* and *Musae Etonenses* are, if I recollect right, of his composition. In one addressed to the Prince of Wales,

Tu destinatus imperare liberis  
Parere primum,

are lines happily imitated from the Greek adage,

οὐκ ἔστιν ἄρχειν, μὴ ἀρχθέντα\* :

a maxim Dryden might have introduced in a tragedy and rhymed thus,

"Stoop then to rise; Ambition's sons, they say,  
Are taught to rule by learning to obey."—V.H.

[William George, D.D., Headmaster of Eton; and Provost of King's College, Cambridge, in 1743. He died in 1756. His wife was Miss Bland, daughter of his predecessor at Eton.]

\* [Lord Holland's quotation is obscure, and is, besides, scarcely legible. It is suggested that ἀρχεῖ πρῶτον μὲν ἀρχεσθαι was the line which he had in mind.]



her at Mrs. Hewitt's (who was, I think, her granddaughter) at the age of one hundred and one—the oldest person I ever met in company. Of this same Dr. George, it is related, that on hearing the King of Prussia, then a young military hero, extolled for his abilities, he observed, "I should like to have him up in my school to a verb in *μὲν*."

Similar notions of excellence might be brought home to the pedants and masters of my own time. My schoolfellows, however, aspired even during their education to a better kind of literary fame, and not without success. *The Microcosm* was published while I was at Eton. I was myself too young, idle, and ignorant to contribute to the work. The four chief conductors were John or Joseph Smith, usually called by a nickname Easley; Robert Percy Smith, yet more generally designated by his nickname Bobus—both collegers, but unconnected by blood—and George Canning and John Hookham Frere—Oppidans. Among the occasional contributors were Lord Henry Spencer,<sup>1</sup> who, notwithstanding his constitutional shyness and reserve, would have distinguished himself by his wit and ingenuity, but died at the early age of twenty-four when employed on a mission to Berlin; and Mr. Mellish, who passed an adventurous life chiefly abroad, and translated many German works for the booksellers in London.

The elder Smith, surnamed Easley, was nephew of Sir Nathaniel Grove, the Puisne Judge, and, through the interest of his uncle or of Mr. Canning, obtained some places in the Courts of Justice and the Colonies, in which he silently enjoyed the profits, without

<sup>1</sup> [Lord Henry Spencer (1770—1795), second son of George, fourth Duke of Marlborough, and Lady Caroline Russell, daughter of John, fourth Duke of Bedford.]

offence, but without rising or aspiring to any eminence in his profession or in literature.<sup>1</sup> His numbers, in which there was rather an ostentatious display of learning and a dash of unintelligible metaphysics, were great favourites with the schoolboys. They passed with us for prodigies of learning and profound speculation. Boys generally form a very correct prognostic of the temper, disposition, and courage, and a very erroneous one of the prudence, sense, and abilities of their schoolfellows.

Of Robert Percy Smith,<sup>2</sup> elder brother of Sydney; married to my aunt, Miss Vernon; first, Advocate-General of Calcutta, and afterwards, representative for Lincoln in two successive Parliaments, I shall probably speak more than once in the course of these pages: but, having mentioned him as an Eton boy, I cannot withhold my testimony to his early proficiency and extraordinary promise. He was clearly the soundest scholar of his day; he had not only by his own unaided exertions mastered the Italian language and literature, but had already read and reflected on as many and as profound works, both ancient and modern, on ethics, politics, and divinity, as would have enabled an ordinary student in either of our Universities to set up for an accomplished metaphysician. Yet nature had done more for him than study. He was a descendant of a sister of Sir Isaac Newton, and his powers of application and reasoning,

<sup>1</sup> He died, Deputy-Paymaster of the Navy, in 1827.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [Robert Percy Smith (1770—1845), eldest son of Robert Smith, a London merchant, and Maria Olier, the daughter of a French refugee. He married in 1797, Caroline, daughter of Richard Vernon and Evelyn, first Countess of Upper Ossory. Their son, Robert Vernon Smith, was created Lord Lyveden. Lord Holland's mother, Lady Mary FitzPatrick, was a daughter of Lady Upper Ossory by her first marriage.]

though never directed to science, seemed to claim and justify the relationship. He had, too, a wonderful command of language. If he seldom displayed his pleasantry and imagination, enough escaped him to satisfy even a superficial observer that he had in store, though he perhaps disdained to use it, as much of both of those commodities as glittered in the conversation of his brother and attracted the applause of fashionable society in London. Perhaps the strict discipline to which Robert Smith had inured his mind even at Eton perverted rather than directed, encumbered rather than enriched it. Notions not very friendly to our species and crudely adopted from books when a boy, though quite foreign from his natural character, which was sanguine and gay as well as ambitious, checked him in the career of his profession, aggravated many little unavoidable but not insuperable disappointments, dimmed the brilliancy of his spirits, and though they could not extinguish the native warmth of his heart, confined its influence to too small a circle, and gave up, not to party, but to the parlour and the fireside, what was meant and admirably formed for mankind.

The early inclinations of George Canning destined him to another career than that of letters. His success in it renders it superfluous to say much of him as a writer or companion, though in both those capacities he rose far beyond mediocrity. In all, his quick sense of ridicule, his readiness and exuberance, both in fancy and in expression, were conspicuous. Perhaps his characteristic excellence when a boy, *viz.*, prodigious facility of composition, is more necessary in this country to the success of an orator or a Minister than depth and originality of thought. He was, indeed, when compared with some of his fellow





Wm. A. H. Frere

Frere, William (1791-1841)

Right Hon. John Hookham Frere



labourers in *The Microcosm*, more showy than solid, but it does not follow from thence that he was for that early age in any degree superficial. His papers in that work were the most lively, and his verses more easy and sonorous than those of his associates. His Latin exercises and English effusions excelled in splendour of diction and brilliancy of wit, rather than in the expression of passion or truth of poetical feeling.

Considering the station<sup>1</sup> he now occupies and the events that are passing, it is curious to reflect that his first copy of English verses (written, as he assured me, before he came to Eton, and consequently ere he was twelve years of age) was on the Slavery of Greece, and contains a fervent exhortation and prayer for the liberation of its inhabitants. It is to be found in the 5th number of *The Microcosm*.

The least successful in that juvenile work was John Hookham Frere; yet he had a genius better adapted to letters than any of his coadjutors. Although indistinct or, at least, inconsistent in his reasoning, he excelled them all in originality of thought, humour, and expression. His merits (to use a happy phrase of his own) were of a manufacture less suited to foreign export than to home consumption. It was therefore mistaken friendship in Mr. Canning to engage him in diplomacy. His artless temper, his ill-directed suspicions, his absence, occasional rudeness, and habitual indolence and singularity, all obviously disqualified him for that line. Had he been employed in England, his devotion to his friends, the ardour of his mind, and the stores of his memory, but, above all, the originality of his humour, would doubtless have made him a first-rate political writer. Had he yet more

<sup>1</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Greeks in insurrection when this was written in 1826.—V.H.



fortunately confined himself to literature, his genius might have raised him to the character of an original critic and moralist, and perhaps have placed him on the same form with those poets who have furnished the best models of excellence in our language. As it was, the very habits which disqualified him for serious business added a zest to his conversation and gave a relish to all private intercourse with him in society. You laughed with him when he was facetious, you smiled at him when he was odd. He had warm and generous affections, but it was shrewdly observed of him that his attachments, like those of a cat, were stronger to places than to persons.

He was the only man ever so enamoured of quarantine, as to linger beyond his time in a *Lazaretto*, and quit it with reluctance and almost by compulsion. I have known him detained in a house for more than a fortnight, by a secret plot with his servant to neglect his orders and not to drive round the carriage, pack up his things, or announce the hour of his departure. He has been in his carriage on the eve of a long journey, and suddenly induced to get out of it in search of a book left behind in the room, where, finding and beginning to read it, he has thrown himself into a chair, and insensibly allowed the day to pass, and almost as imperceptibly postponed his intended departure for a week. The peculiar character of his humour is not easily described. His repartees or sayings, when deliberately recounted, do not preserve it. There was a playful archness in his sarcasms, keen but not offensive. There was a felicity in his phraseology (though he was not fluent) which, without exceeding the tone of familiar conversation, displayed a reach of fancy and strength of feeling delightful and unusual. He was a superstitious

admirer of past times. He loved to sneer at the self-complacency with which our generation contemplates its real or supposed improvements in philosophy and the arts of life. When the unproductive state of the Peninsula was objected to his exaggerated praises of Spain and Portugal, he replied that "he loved a country where God Almighty kept large portions of land in his own hands."

He had read little or nothing systematically, but he devoured every book that fell within his reach, and remembered all he met with in such desultory studies with an accuracy almost miraculous. Such facility of emotion, combined with a strong propensity to exercise his faculties on every subject presented to his mind, made him a very indulgent critic. He not only saw much more in a book than the author ever intended to convey, but he frequently built systems on foundations created by his own imagination and in no degree warranted by the work in which he fancied that he had discovered them.

What Montesquieu said of Voltaire is true of him, "*Tous les livres qu'il lit, il les fait; après quoi il approuve ou critique ce qu'il a fait.*" Hence he delighted in authors who deal in obscure allusions, whimsical images, and fanciful theories. Rabelais and Aristophanes were among his favourites. He was not only capable of tasting the satire, poetry, and wit of the latter, but he lent most of those qualities to every indifferent passage of his plays, discerning in every word more than struck the ear, and ascribing to the whole composition a systematic and patriotic design which was certainly never professed, and probably never harboured, by the writer. According to Frere, it was not gaiety, vanity, or malignity, which induced the great Athenian comic

poet to libel the best man of his country and expose the first tragedian of his time to the ridicule of the rabble; it was, forsooth, a due sense of the pernicious effects of a mistaken theory of morals, and a deliberate apprehension of the consequences of an enervated and effeminate taste in composition. His scurrility and buffoonery were patriotic endeavours to rescue his countrymen from the persuasive philosophy of Socrates and the seductive poetry of Euripides.

In the interval between school and college I made a tour in Scotland, but I missed, on that and some subsequent occasions, the advantage of making acquaintance with the Principal, Robertson, the historian,<sup>1</sup> to whom I had letters of introduction. In truth, I heard very little conversation on literature in that northern land of letters, except strictures on the spirit and criticisms on the details of Dr. Johnson's *Tour to the Hebrides*. That work and the poems of Ossian were then comparatively recent publications. They had not ceased to excite, in a different manner though nearly to an equal degree, the passions of the *literati* in Scotland, where society, though divided on other topics, is and ever will be singularly tenacious on such as in any way affect their national character or reputation. Boswell was accused of having sacrificed his country to his authorship, of having led the English philosopher into the least attractive regions and least polished society he could find, with the view of provoking epigrams and extorting sarcasms wherewith to season his narrative and give a zest to tales otherwise insipid and uninteresting. It was Henry Erskine,<sup>2</sup> afterwards Lord Advocate, who termed

<sup>1</sup> [William Robertson (1721—1793), Principal of Edinburgh University until 1792.]

<sup>2</sup> Second brother to Lord Buchan and elder brother of Lord Erskine,



Boswell "the Bear Leader," and pretended that on being introduced to Dr. Johnson in the streets of Edinburgh, he had simply bowed to the stranger, but turned round to his countryman and slipped half-a-crown into his hand with thanks for the show.

In no town in which I ever resided did I see less of men distinguished for learning and literature than in Oxford during the two years I spent in that University. Tom Warton<sup>1</sup> was dead before I was entered, and his place in Trinity College was ill supplied by a gentleman of the name of Kett,<sup>2</sup> as an epigram very current in those days attests, *viz.*,

The glorious sun of Trinity is set,  
And naught shines now but farthing candle Kett.

Mr. Crowe,<sup>3</sup> the public orator, a fellow of New College, had more merit. As a Latin scholar he was without a rival, as a poet he was not despicable. Mr. Rogers has so unfeigned an admiration for his works that he seldom travels without a copy of them, as well as of Gray, in his chaise pocket. His verses on the installation of the Duke of Portland<sup>4</sup> contain an invective against war worthy of Milton himself. But his Whig, not to say Republican,

whom he greatly resembled, and nearly equalled both in his genius and his foibles. He was almost as vain; in vivacity of parts, suavity of manners, and playfulness of fancy fully equal to him; and in forensic talents and eloquence, though inferior, very like him.—V.H.

[Hon. Henry Erskine (1746—1817), second son of Henry David, tenth Earl of Buchan. Lord Advocate in 1783 and 1806.]

<sup>1</sup> [Thomas Warton, the younger (1728—1790). Poet Laureate from 1785. He wrote *A History of English Poetry to the End of the Sixteenth Century*.]

<sup>2</sup> [Henry Kett (1761—1825). Appointed a fellow of Trinity College in 1784. He drowned himself in a fit of depression, to which he was subject.]

<sup>3</sup> [William Crowe (1745—1829), poet and divine. Son of a Winchester carpenter.]

<sup>4</sup> [As Chancellor of Oxford University.]

propensities, which peep forth in that very poem, were so offensive in Oxford that blemishes in his moral character were remembered, and perhaps invented, to justify the neglect he experienced from successive Governments and the little store set by the University on his productions and lectures. His manners, it must be acknowledged, as well as his habits, were somewhat coarse and unsocial.

Dr. Sibthorp,<sup>1</sup> who, I believe, succeeded his father in the Botanical Chair, and who travelled and died in Greece, had acquired some celebrity in his humble walk of science. An awkward circumstance was said to have occurred on his application for the professorship. To qualify, the candidate must be furnished with testimonials not only of having studied, but of having actually practised, physic. Dr. Sibthorp had, indeed, attended the sick, but then there were none alive to attest it; so that in adducing proof of his having exercised his profession, he was compelled to raise a strong presumption of his unfitness for it, and to divulge the mortifying fact that not one of his few patients had survived his prescriptions.

Dr. Cyril Jackson,<sup>2</sup> Dean of Christ Church, enjoyed and deserved great reputation as the head of a college. He had some general knowledge, was a good scholar, and by some little artifices of manner, as well as by many real acts of benevolence, contrived to excite in the young men much respect for the institutions of the University and great notions of his dignity, abilities, and virtues. He was, in truth, a very honourable, disinterested, and warm-hearted man.

<sup>1</sup> [John Sibthorp (1758—1796).]

<sup>2</sup> [Cyril Jackson (1746—1819), Dean of Christ Church, 1783—1809. He declined preferment to a bishopric, which was on several occasions offered to him.]

He taught, however, and, I believe, felt, so indiscriminate a veneration for all received opinions because they were received, that he became, without meanness, a worshipper of rank, and, although not destitute of sagacity and utterly exempt from the mean passions of envy or jealousy, a favourer of mediocrity. The effect, though not intention, of his system, could it have prevailed, would have been to leave all prejudices unmolested, and thereby to slacken exertion and discourage improvement, to inculcate caution on his pupils till he had damped their genius, and to reduce all political and literary merit to deference for authority and prudent admiration of acknowledged excellence. He had been employed under Markham, Archbishop of York, in the education of the Prince of Wales and Frederick, Duke of York. That circumstance gave him access to both those Princes throughout his life: and he affected more than he actually enjoyed, recounting to his listeners at Oxford, at one time, the blunt reproofs, at others, the friendly advice he had given to his Royal pupils. From compliance with George III.'s partiality, or from a genuine preference of manly character over quickness of parts, he always professed more attachment to the Duke of York than the Prince of Wales. The latter, aware of his predilections and nettled at them, took an odd method of revenging himself by retaliation. In all companies he launched forth in commendation of William Jackson, younger brother of the Dean.<sup>1</sup> He would extol his merits as a companion, friend, and scholar, though he well knew him to be a dull, selfish, and ordinary man; and he studiously represented him as superior to his brother, though he owed to the celebrity and friendship of that brother what

<sup>1</sup> [William Jackson (1751--1815), Bishop of Oxford, 1812--1815.]



little credit or reputation he enjoyed at college, as well as all the preferment, including the Bishopric of Oxford, that he obtained in the Church.

Dr. Beddoes<sup>1</sup> had not closed his lectures when I first went to college, but I never attended them ; nor did I become acquainted with the lecturer till he had retired from the University in consequence of some disgust arising either from his opinions in politics and religion, or from the peculiarities of his temper, which was neither conciliatory nor tractable.<sup>2</sup> He was a man of science and of genius, but by no means successful as a lecturer. His figure and delivery were ungraceful, his language inflated and ambitious, and he was so singularly awkward in the mechanical part of his experiments that they generally failed, and he was then compelled to proceed in his discourse on the hypothesis that the result had been the reverse of that which the eyes of his audience would have led them to believe. He contributed, however, to the advancement both of chemistry and medicine, and had the merit of discovering the talents and directing the labours and studies of an indigent youth who afterwards became Sir Humphry Davy. All his writings, whether on politics or science, are eloquent and original, but they betray great want of taste, judgment, and prudence. He was rash and paradoxical in the extreme. He above once announced discoveries which he was obliged to retract ; and Dr. Ingenhousz<sup>3</sup> (who somewhat enjoyed his discomfiture)

<sup>1</sup> [Thomas Beddoes (1760—1808), physician. He resigned his post of Reader in Chemistry at Oxford in 1792, partly owing to his sympathy with the French Revolution.]

<sup>2</sup> He published a pamphlet with his name, in which he denominated tithes, and I believe the Church establishment, a remnant of Popery ; and he did not conceal his earnest wishes and expectations of seeing them suppressed.—V.H.

<sup>3</sup> [John Ingenhousz (1730—1799), physician Born at Breda, and

blamed him more for his ignominious candour in abandoning, than his hasty presumption in publishing, such crude and erroneous conjectures. As an instance of his bad taste in language and conversation, I remember that when asked by Lord Lansdown<sup>1</sup> how an election at Bristol was likely to go, he began his reply with these words, "My Lord, when the floodgates of the human mind are once opened. . . ." I believe Lord Lansdown and his audience were not much disposed to await the torrent of eloquence and metaphysical reasoning which was to ensue. In proof of the wildness of his theories, suffice it to mention that he seriously maintained the non-existence of bodily pain. It was the mere effect of education : and a child properly trained for that purpose would find it a pleasurable sensation, and what we consider as pleasurable sensations might, by an opposite system of discipline from that usually practised, be rendered odious and disagreeable and abhorrent to our desires. He afterwards undertook the tuition of young men ; and the acquirements of his pupils (of whom Mr. Lambton was one), as well as their attachment to the memory of their preceptor, do much credit to his head and heart.

The same commendation may be bestowed on the person next presented to my recollection, Dr. Parr.<sup>2</sup> Though a Cambridge man, he frequently visited

came to England about 1765. He was an intimate friend of the first Marquess of Lansdown, and died while on a visit to Bowood.]

<sup>1</sup> [The first Lord Lansdown always signed his name without a terminal *e*, the spelling adopted by his successors.]

<sup>2</sup> [Samuel Parr (1747—1825), son of a Harrow apothecary, and a master at the school. He left there in 1771, from pique because the governors refused to appoint him headmaster, in succession to Dr. Sumner. He set up for himself, and afterwards took the living of Hatton in Warwickshire, and kept private pupils. Many of his letters are preserved at Holland House.]

Oxford, where he lodged at the house of his friend Dr. Routh,<sup>1</sup> Principal of Magdalen, a quiet, learned, and benevolent man, a Tory in his principles and a recluse in his habits. Dr. Parr's reputation for scholarship and his zeal for Whig politics, together with the singularity of his countenance, dress, habits, and manners, rendered him an object of much curiosity and some little dread, both to the tutors and undergraduates. His visits formed a sort of era in Oxford. His sayings were repeated, his appearance, his monstrous wig, his velvet coat, his lisping speech and penetrating eye, his love of smoking, and affected laugh with his shoulders, were the topics of conversation in all the Common rooms and wine parties in the University.

This was precisely what he sought for. It was the sort of celebrity that delighted him. He panted, indeed, for opportunities of conflict with the High Churchmen of the place, with the hope of astonishing the undergraduates by the boldness of his paradoxes, the variety of his quotations, and the wit of his retorts. But the heads of Houses and professors were by no means disposed to indulge him in such intellectual gymnastics. They are seldom inclined to court notoriety, and they seemed somewhat afraid of Dr. Parr. At Christ Church, our superiors refrained from courting him with any ostentation of civility, but they were wonderfully cautious not to offend by any remarks on his maxims in scholarship, politics, and divinity, though printed in sermons and pamphlets and circulated very freely in conversation by his admirers in the University. A distant sneer or an arch inquiry was the utmost symptom of hostility

<sup>1</sup> [Martin Joseph Routh (1755—1854), President of Magdalen College from 1791 until his death.]



ever hazarded against this active champion of every cause they disapproved.<sup>1</sup>

Among the professors at Oxford there was indeed one who had good cause for fear, and yet more for resentment, against Dr. Parr, had he had the ability to gratify it. This was Dr. White,<sup>2</sup> the Arabic Professor. He had signalised himself a few years before by the publication of his Bampton lectures, which were hailed by the orthodox as a triumph for Christianity over Islamism achieved by a member of the Church of England, and by the Oxonians as a proof of the success with which the Oriental languages were studied in their University.

But short-lived was their exaltation. It was soon discovered that a Nonconformist minister, of the name of Badcock, had, for a stipulated sum (which, I think, the professor in an evil hour disputed with his executors), furnished much of the reasoning

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Parr was well aware of the characteristic caution of the head of our college, and of the college itself. "When I leave my card at the Deanery," said he, "I shall write on it,

Carpere vel noli nostra vel ede tua";

and, speaking of the whole society, he often said, "Litus amant." It must be owned that the fate of the little *Phalaris*\* bark, which they launched at the close of the preceding century, was enough to deter them from a second venture. It was prudent to lay up their great vessels if they had any in ordinary.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [Joseph White (1745—1814), theologian and orientalist; Laudian Professor of Arabic, 1775—1814.

He tried to obtain the return of his letters, after Samuel Badcock's death, from the latter's sister. This request was refused, and the matter obtained publicity from the unwillingness of White to meet a bond for £500 found among the papers.]

\* [The *Epistles of Phalaris*, said to have been written by Phalaris, tyrant of Agrigentum in Sicily. The scholars of Christ Church determined at the end of the seventeenth century to publish a new edition of these letters, upholding their genuineness, and entrusted the task to Charles Boyle, afterwards fourth Earl of Orrery. His work was attacked by Richard Bentley, who proved conclusively the weakness of the case.]

and of the Arabic of that vaunted publication. Upon that detection, Dr. Parr, with more eagerness and less generosity than was usual in him, exclaimed, "I, too, could pluck a feather from the crest of that Oxford Phoenix"; and he accordingly made good his claim to several Greek quotations and other admired passages in the lectures. Thus were the hopes of orthodoxy and Oxford suddenly blighted, or rather, the harvest they expected to reap cruelly wrested from them and divided between Non-conformity and Cambridge. Poor Dr. White, stripped of his borrowed plumes, was hooted at and reviled by all the satirists and witlings of the day.

*Cui color albus erat, nunc est contrarius albo.*

The obvious punning quotation of George Selwyn was repeated by every schoolboy, and the professor, though he had raised himself from a low condition in life by learning only, and was, in truth, a good Arabic scholar, a studious, simple,<sup>1</sup> and inoffensive man, could never re-establish his credit or advance his fortune. He edited, in vain, some Oriental works; he acquired no fame and obtained little preferment.<sup>2</sup>

To return to Dr. Parr, I was introduced to him by Mr. Canning, who had made his acquaintance at Mr. Sheridan's or at Crewe Hall. I do not enlarge on his moral, intellectual, or political virtues, all which were very great, because the publications devoted to his memory will be full of them. My task is only to preserve some diverting but harmless foibles in his manners and conversation, which the dignity of graver biographers will very probably suppress.

<sup>1</sup> Of his *simplicity*, especially in money matters, many ludicrous and even incredible stories were recounted—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> Canopy of Christ Church and Hebrew Professorship.—V.H.

I should, however, be sorry, were my reader to imagine that I was really insensible to Dr. Parr's many excellent qualities of head and heart, his learning, his eloquence, his political consistency and integrity, his warm affections, disinterestedness, and generosity. Of the latter virtue especially, I have known many instances in his conduct to his pupils. None, however, but such as have seen him in a society of undergraduates, surrounded by old pupils and young admirers over whom he exercised unlimited jurisdiction in all matters of taste and learning, can believe the liberties he took or the absurdities into which his vanity betrayed him. So little was any interchange of ideas necessary to gratify him that he launched forth in praise of the extraordinary *erudition* of his neighbour at a public dinner on a Gaudy day, who turned out to be neither more nor less than the beadle of the college, admitted by old usage to a seat at the table on such solemn occasions, but aspiring to no further academical attainments than the sweeping<sup>1</sup> the quadrangles, or, at the utmost, writing down the name of the students for whom the gates were opened after sunset. He had, however, no doubt earned the panegyric bestowed upon him, by listening with profound silence and veneration to the Latin and Greek which Dr. Parr had poured into his ears. The Doctor enlarged with great complacency on the effect, as well as Latinity, of his preface to Bellendenus.<sup>2</sup> He had introduced into that work some severe strictures on the character of Mr. Pitt's eloquence,

<sup>1</sup> I am not sure that he did so much in virtue of his office of beadle; by profession the man was a barber.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [A Latin preface to a new edition of three treatises by William Bellenden (d. 1633), into which he infused a political current, by dedicating it to the *tria lumina Anglorum*—Burke, Fox, and North, and by denouncing the leading men of the other party.]



and he observed that his friend Mr. Horner thought it would "turn that Minister out"; but then he would add, with an appearance of overstrained humility, "But Horner is a sanguine man."

He told us, I well remember, that he suspected Pitt of a settled design of subverting the idiom of the language, as well as overturning the constitution. "The dog talks grammar," he said, "but it is an insidious masked battery under which he may better assail our idiom." Then he would relate how he had sat in the gallery of the House of Commons and thrown his "whole grammatical mind" upon the orator, a process which he acted with most significant gestures, and then added, "The dog caught my eye, and chastised his faulty phraseology."

There was a report at that time that our late fellow-collegian, Mr. Jenkinson (afterwards Lord Liverpool and Prime Minister), had been entrusted with a mission to the French Princes, who had taken refuge and were then meditating war against their country at Coblenz. Dr. Parr inveighed against such an appointment, but we were all somewhat startled upon discovering that it was not the mission but the choice of the envoy alone which scandalised him. So young a man, he observed, could not be equal to it; and although he would himself never serve Billy (for so he contemptuously termed Mr. Pitt), that Premier would do well to look out for a clergyman of such habits, sagacity, and scholarship as himself, to ascertain the views and fathom the designs of those revolted Princes on the Rhine.

In speaking of living scholars, metaphysicians, and writers, he would frequently name those whom he thought the first and the third in each department of excellence; but he always omitted the second,

manifestly reserving that place for himself, and as manifestly pluming himself on his modesty in not asserting his right to the first, which he hoped his auditors would in their hearts assign him. In this scale of excellence he always placed Mr. Porson<sup>1</sup> at the head of our Greek scholars. It was just and prudent to do so. The concurrent testimony of all his contemporaries would have granted to that gentleman the same pre-eminence that Dr. Parr, perhaps rather reluctantly, assigned him.

Porson was in scholarship *facile princeps*; in memory he was a prodigy; in wit and understanding a much more extraordinary man than such prodigies usually are. Persons intimate with him have assured me that he not only knew most of the ancient poets and all the Greek tragedians by heart, but would repeat nearly *verbatim* the notes of the most approved editions. He usually did so when any passage was quoted in his presence, specifying the page, the column, and the place of the respective editions, where the passage itself and the notes he had repeated were to be found. His recollection of words was certainly not confined to poetry or eloquence. He could, and did often, recite long and dull comments in Greek, Latin, and English, *verbatim*. He knew all the notes of Gibbon by heart; and when sentences of the text of that historian or of any of his favourite works (among which Foote's Farces must be reckoned) were read or alluded to, he usually finished the paragraph or scene without omitting a word. He was not, like Napoleon, a great proficient in mathematics; but he had, like him, a

<sup>1</sup> [Richard Porson (1759—1808). Born of humble parents, his marvellous memory as a child attracted early notice, and he was sent to Eton on the Foundation. A fund was specially raised to maintain him at Cambridge, where he was entered at Trinity College. He was elected Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge in 1792.]

memory as retentive of numbers as of everything else. He occasionally took an unaccountable pleasure in repeating large sums, and had a tiresome trick of counting them aloud, especially after he had drunk much wine, and was disposed by such a test to prove to himself that his faculties were not sensibly impaired thereby.

Such peculiarities did not add to his charms as a companion. I never saw him but twice, and on both occasions in a club, where he was a visitor and not a member,<sup>1</sup> and where he had little opportunity of display, except indeed by long quotations from Hickeys' *Thesaurus* and other singular rather than agreeable proofs of the extent and accuracy of his memory. When I asked him to my house he peremptorily declined coming; on my repeating my invitation, he sent me word that he had "broken his leg and could not come," though he was frequently met about the same time walking in the streets. Perhaps he was affronted at my sending the invitation by a common friend, instead of calling myself, or perhaps he was on that, as on other occasions, extremely jealous of being invited as a show. Such, at least, was the interpretation frequently put by him on the marks of homage which slight acquaintances, and even strangers, were naturally disposed to pay to his extraordinary talents and celebrity.

<sup>1</sup> The King of Clubs, instituted by some lawyers and men of letters. Among its founders were Mr. Robert Percy Smith, Sir Samuel Romilly, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Dumont, Mr. Sharp,<sup>a</sup> and Mr. Whishaw.<sup>b</sup> It lasted near twenty years, but expired soon after the death of Sir Samuel Romilly, who was more constant in his attendance than Mr. Sydney Smith, Mr. Brougham, and other persons of eminence who had been chosen members thereof.—V.H.

[The club was first instituted about the year 1801.]

<sup>a</sup> [Richard Sharp (1759—1835), known as "Conversation Sharp."]

<sup>b</sup> [John Whishaw, Secretary to the African Association.]



In recording such misplaced pride and false notions of independence, it is just to add that in the more important concerns of life his sense of honour was to the full as susceptible and his spirit as inflexible. He sacrificed without ostentation great advantages of station and prospects of fortune to conscience. Having eluded the manœuvres and rejected the solicitations of those who urged him to qualify for a clerical fellowship in his college, as well as subsequent preferment by taking holy orders, he, from the same scruple and dislike of the Thirty-nine Articles, was willing to forego the favourite object of his ambition, the Greek Professorship at Cambridge. His sarcastic letter to Dr. Postlethwaite,<sup>1</sup> on that occasion, establishes beyond dispute both his disapprobation of those Articles and his conscientious adherence to truth at the expense of interest and advancement. When one reflects that he had no private fortune, no rich connections,<sup>2</sup> no expectations whatever, such

<sup>1</sup> I do not insert it, for in all probability it has been or will be printed elsewhere.—V.H.

[Porson, who had been elected a fellow of Trinity, was obliged by the statutes to resign his fellowship within seven years unless he had taken orders. This he was unwilling to do, and when he applied to Dr. Postlethwaite, the Master of Trinity, for one of the lay fellowships which would enable him to remain a fellow, his request was refused. On the Greek Professorship becoming vacant in 1792, Dr. Postlethwaite wrote urging Porson to become a candidate. The latter, thinking he would be obliged to sign the Thirty-nine Articles, at first refused, but on finding out his mistake, came forward, and was unanimously elected. One of the passages in the letter referred to by Lord Holland is: "The same reason which hindered me from keeping my fellowship by the method you obligingly pointed out, would, I am afraid, prevent me from being Greek Professor."]

<sup>2</sup> His birth and family were very humble indeed. Mr. Rogers, who is so uniformly accurate that one can quote his conversation as testimony to a fact, says he is pretty confident that his father was a sexton or gravedigger in one of the Eastern counties in England.—V.H.

[His father, a worsted weaver by trade, was parish clerk at East Ruston, near North Walsham, Norfolk.]

inflexibility of principle and self-respect must extort one's admiration and applause. His conduct is the more praiseworthy, as it was dictated neither by the vanity of fanaticism nor the zeal of making proselytes. What his particular opinions on religion were is not known; at least, he never took much pains to promulgate them. He speaks of himself as not a "sound believer" in the Church sense of that word. Whether he confined his objections to the peculiar creed of the Church of England, or denied revelation altogether, I have never ascertained.

While resident at the University, although avowedly not orthodox, he abstained himself [from], and discountenanced in others, all scoffs at Christianity. His subsequent habits and intimacies must have familiarised him with great freedom of conversation on such topics; and it was generally supposed that he was a sceptic or freethinker. As a scholar and critic, in which capacities his authority will ever be greatest, his testimony was manifestly unfavourable to the Trinitarian interpretation of Scripture. His masterly letters to Archdeacon Travis finally exploded the verse of St. John—the only text approaching to a direct assertion of three persons in the Godhead.<sup>1</sup> His conviction that the New Testament never predicates in positive terms, nor implies by fair inference from language the existence of the Trinity, seems almost acknowledged in his writings. It was not, I apprehend, concealed, much less denied, by him in conversation. The Trinitarians, who are disposed to

<sup>1</sup> [These "letters" were the result of Porson's researches in divinity at the period when he was seeking to make up his mind about taking holy orders. George Travis (1741—1797), Archdeacon of Chester, in his *Letter to Gibbon*, had upheld the genuineness of the text, 1 St. John v. 7; but his conclusions were ruthlessly pulled to pieces by Porson's superior reasoning.]

stigmatised their Arian and Unitarian adversaries as dishonest and ignorant, must be prepared to maintain some strong paradoxes with respect to celebrated men. They must question the sincerity of Lardner, and deny the learning of Milton, Clarke, Porson, and Wakefield.<sup>1</sup>

Porson had more particles of pride than vanity, and more principle than affection, in his composition. But had it not been for the vice of drunkenness in which he indulged in a manner that degraded him, he would have been a respectable man in character as well as abilities and acquirements. He could never have been an amiable one. Yet was he a friend to liberty, and by no means indifferent to the improvement of mankind. In that respect he was the reverse of Swift, whom in other points he resembled and in some little degree rivalled. Swift said he could love Jack or Jem, but hated and despised the human race. Porson, on the contrary, had some benevolence for the species, but seemed incapable of loving Jack, Jem, or any individual. His English verses (fragments rather than poems) seem, from their extreme exactness in rhyme, rhythm, and expression, to have cost as much pains as those of Swift himself. They are to the full as biting and malignant.

In the two most successful efforts of his muse, *viz.*, his verses on the fellows of Trinity College, and his address to Cambridge on the admission of the young Duke of Gloucester, there is so much indecency

<sup>1</sup> If one added to the list such names as Hooker, Newton, Locke, Tillotson, Middleton, Paley, and Low, one should not perhaps vary materially from the judgment formed of those writers' opinions by the respective champions of the two doctrines; though, in direct words, none of them have avowed, and some have distinctly denied, all doubts of the Trinity. They are not, however, such Trinitarians as exclude Arians or even Socinians from the pale of Christianity.—V.H.



blended with the satire that, although among the best lampoons in our language, I shall not venture to insert them. . . .

Specimens of his repartees are more common and have more merit; but I am afraid of repeating things elsewhere preserved and generally known. When some enthusiastic admirer of the knot of writers called "Lake Poets," in extolling Wordsworth, Southey, and the rest *qui pauperes esse volunt et pauperes sunt*, emphatically predicted that they would be read when Virgil, Milton, Dryden, and Pope were forgotten, "I agree with you, and *not till then*," was the dry and contemptuous answer of Porson. When pressed, after a tiresome metaphysical disquisition by Dr. Parr, to give his opinion on the origin of moral and physical evil: "Why, I think," said he, "Doctor, we should have done very well without them."

There was a project for sending him with Lord Elgin's<sup>1</sup> Embassy to Constantinople, in the hope that he might discover, decipher, and elucidate manuscripts, inscriptions, documents, and other remains of antiquity. Whether the objections to such an appointment originated with himself or Lord Elgin, I know not. The latter has been reproached with it. But it is just to remark that Porson, scholar and wit as he was, would, from the intemperance of his habits and the perverse susceptibility of his temper, have been rather a troublesome inmate, especially in a residence where during the war there was no resource for society but within the walls of the Embassy. His place was supplied by Mr. Carlyle<sup>2</sup> and Dr.

<sup>1</sup> [Thomas, seventh Earl of Elgin (1766—1841), Ambassador to the Porte from 1799 to 1803, and collector of the "Elgin Marbles," now in the British Museum.]

<sup>2</sup> [Joseph Dacre Carlyle (1759—1804), chaplain to the mission.]

Hunt. The former translated and published some very pretty specimens of Arabic poetry; the latter, who was afterwards chaplain to the Duke of Bedford in Ireland, became a very useful magistrate in Bedfordshire, without neglecting the studies of antiquity and *virtu* in which he had made great proficiency in Greece and Asia Minor.

To return to the worthies of Oxford during my residence there. I knew few of the professors, nor did many of them give the undergraduates opportunity or inclination to cultivate their acquaintance by the frequency or excellence of their lectures. Mr. Wooddeson,<sup>1</sup> who filled the Vinerian Chair, had ceased to deliver the lectures (which he published) before my time. They have merit and learning, and though not so complete nor so eloquent as those of his predecessor, Blackstone,<sup>2</sup> they are certainly less tinged with the peculiar tenets of the place in which they were delivered than the commentaries of that perspicuous writer and learned but somewhat obsequious judge.

Dr. Wenman,<sup>3</sup> the professor of Civil Law, both from his connections and his subject, was likely to maintain tenets more congenial to the Metropolis of Toryism. But his lectures attracted so little notice and made so faint an impression on his auditors that I have forgotten their character, and believe that I never heard their merits even discussed.

The Professor of Mathematics was Mr. Robison or Mr. Robinson,<sup>4</sup> a Scotchman. He had taken his

<sup>1</sup> [Richard Wooddeson, the younger (1745—1822); fellow of Magdalen College and Vinerian Professor, 1777—1793.]

<sup>2</sup> [Sir William Blackstone (1723—1780).]

<sup>3</sup> [Thomas Francis Wenman (1745—1796); Fellow of All Souls College, and Regius Professor, 1789—1796.]

<sup>4</sup> [John Robison (1739—1805). Elected Lecturer on Chemistry at Glasgow in 1766, and described by Sir James Mackintosh as one of the greatest mathematical philosophers of his age.]

degree, or at least had acquired his science, at Glasgow; and Mr. Windham, before his hostility to the French Revolution had weaned him from the practice of irreverent jokes and excited in him some hopes of representing the University in Parliament, used to make himself merry at the expense of his Alma Mater, who, finding such a dearth of science among her own sons, had been compelled to send to a northern and Presbyterian nursery for a mathematician capable of filling her own chair.<sup>1</sup> The duties required, however, by the office were either very light or the northern luminary very scandalously neglected them. I never heard of his lectures, his pupils, or his examinations, and I shrewdly suspect he had none.

Dr. Hornsby,<sup>2</sup> Professor of Astronomy, did give lectures, and they were not ill-attended. Yet they were such as many a lad in a Scotch or foreign University, and many an itinerant teacher unmatericulated in any, could have easily supplied. Those on divinity by Dr. Randolph<sup>3</sup> were probably distinguished by more talent, and certainly possessed learning seldom found and perhaps not often sought

<sup>1</sup> He added that an Oriental scholar from Hungary or Bohemia had been invited to decipher the Arabic MSS., as no resident Oxonian was equal to that duty; and that the poor foreigner, after sundry vexations and indignities, and notwithstanding his laborious execution of his task, was unhandsomely dismissed without sufficient remuneration either in money or in fame. I have forgotten the man's name, but I think it was "Uri."—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [Thomas Hornsby (1733—1810); Fellow of Corpus Christi College and appointed Savilian Professor of Astronomy in 1763.]

<sup>3</sup> [John Randolph, D.D. (1749—1813). He held many professorships at the University before becoming Bishop of Oxford in 1799; he became Bishop of Bangor in 1807, and of London in 1809. It is related that most of his divinity lectures were delivered by candlelight, and though notes were to be taken, his supposed listeners were usually asleep.]



for out of the walls of a college. Yet they were no favourites with the public, nor even with those young men who were destined to Holy Orders. This was owing to the slovenly delivery, awkward and obscure phraseology, and rude, unpolished manners of the lecturer. Under that exterior, however, the ungraceful and ungracious priest, narrow-minded Tory as he was, concealed a kind heart and a disinterested, compassionate, and generous disposition. He became first Bishop of Oxford, and afterwards of London, where he died soon after his elevation to the see.

In the Medical or Anatomical Chairs there was no professor of superior, or even equal, eminence. Grosvenor,<sup>1</sup> a very able surgeon, resident in Oxford, was not, I believe, a member of the University, and certainly filled no office in it. Sir Christopher, then *Doctor Pegge*,<sup>2</sup> is chiefly remarkable for having been the successful competitor of Dr. Vaughan, afterwards Sir Henry Halford.<sup>3</sup> That more distinguished and fortunate man thus owed to defeat the advantage of settling in the only place where practice as extensive as that which he exercised for more than thirty years could have been obtained. If he did not derive from his academical studies that physical activity and cheerfulness and those qualities of sagacity and attractions of manner which were the real causes of his success in London and at Windsor, he at least brought from Oxford that taste for pure Latinity and classical

<sup>1</sup> [John Grosvenor (1742—1823), proprietor and editor of the *Oxford Journal*. He was admitted to the privileges of the University in 1768.]

<sup>2</sup> [Sir Christopher Pegge (1765—1822), appointed Regius Professor of Physic in 1801.]

<sup>3</sup> [Sir Henry Halford (1766—1844), son of Dr. James Vaughan. He changed his name on inheriting a large property in 1809. He practised in London, and was made a baronet by George III., whom he attended, as well as George IV., William IV., and Queen Victoria.]

composition, which he loved to display with some degree of self-complacency in the College of Physicians.

In the meanwhile the protection of the Dean and tutors of Christ Church, which had raised Pegge to the Chair, could never render his anatomical school famous beyond the walls of the University or popular with the young men within them.<sup>1</sup> There was a whisper among them that his science was superficial; and even in judging of his diction and delivery, which I am assured were above mediocrity, they unfairly persisted in contrasting them with those of his predecessor, Dr. Thompson, a man who had been expelled the University, but the memory of whose ready eloquence and extraordinary perspicuity survived the ruin of his moral character and his consequent retirement in Italy. He died after a residence of a few years in that country, where his medical attainments so far expiated his religious and other heresies that the Pope condescended to consult him, and, if I mistake not, to appoint him Physician-in-Ordinary. He was a great mineralogist, and left a valuable collection of specimens, which he directed by his will to be, in the first instance, offered to Christ Church, and if refused by that college to be transferred to the University of Glasgow. Christ Church, as he foresaw, declined the bequest. They could not do otherwise. They could not question by implication the justice of that expulsion inflicted by the University, to which their representatives in the *Caput* had been a party. Glasgow had no reason and probably no inclination

<sup>1</sup> On one of those occasions, in commending the younger students for their diligence and exhorting them to persevere in it, his phraseology, pure and Ciceronian as it was, exposed him to the saucy waggery of some punsters, for he began one of his earnest paragraphs with these words, "*Pergite, Adolescentes, Pergite*, inquam, *Adolescentes*." —V.H.

to be so scrupulous. She accepted cheerfully a donation from a stranger whose conduct had never either directly or indirectly come under her cognizance.

Respect or gratitude to John Hunter, who came from the neighbourhood of Glasgow, may have induced Dr. Thompson to confer such a favour on that Northern University.<sup>1</sup> Hunter,<sup>2</sup> possibly from reliance on some partial representation or from the prepossessions of friendship, but more probably from a zeal for science, which deemed the protection of its interests and of those capable of promoting it paramount to all other considerations, had loudly arraigned the justice of the proceedings against Thompson at Oxford, had strongly dissuaded and lamented his precipitate retreat, and was, even after that event, hardly prevailed upon to suppress a pamphlet he had written in his vindication. This proceeded from that same ardour

<sup>1</sup> It would be uncharitable to attribute the selection of Glasgow to any persuasion in the testator's mind that the Northern University had fewer scruples than its neighbours, when anything was to be got by concealing or overruling them. There is, however, a story current that a Mr. Zachary Boyd once left a valuable collection of MSS. to that Learned Body, on condition that a Bible in doggerel verse of his composition should always lie on the table of the library. The translation was not, indeed, in intention a *travesty*, but it had all the effect of one. The University was sorely perplexed between a due reverence for the sacred writings and an unwillingness to forego a valuable legacy. At length they hit upon an expedient by which they hoped to secure the bequest, spare their students and visitors the scandal of seeing the scripture in so unbecoming a garb, and yet adhere to the letter of the conditions. They nailed the book to the table, enclosed it in a heavy wooden binding with ponderous clasps; and if they did not prohibit, discouraged all examination of it, as well as resorted to every artifice to prevent its attracting any notice whatever.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [John Hunter (1728—1793), the celebrated surgeon and anatomist. Born in Lanarkshire, he first practised cabinet-making in Glasgow, but at the age of twenty went to London, where he commenced his studies in anatomy. He took part in Keppel's expedition to Belleisle in 1761, and was appointed Surgeon-Extraordinary to George III. in 1776.]



or intrepidity of mind, which was the mainspring of John Hunter's actions throughout life, and the real cause of his inquiries, discoveries, and celebrity; but which nevertheless betrayed him occasionally into acts of imprudence and passion, and subjected him, even in his professional practice, to the imputation of sacrificing his patients to his theory. His enemies, who were many and virulent, no doubt took some pains to blacken him; but there is no denying that his judgment was occasionally clouded by an irascible and tenacious temper.

Even on subjects unconnected with his pursuits, and where he had no right to assume authority, he was apt to be positive, dogmatical, and angry. If such instances of intemperate behaviour had been confined to those which arose from his horror, real or affected, of revolutionary principles, I should not have alluded to them, even though they led him to exclude well-qualified persons from professional advantages and scientific Societies where their merits entitled them to admission. Such prejudices were not only common, but almost universal, during the unhappy epoch of the French Revolution, with all persons who had attained a certain station in society. They were the vices of the time, not of the individual. Every man, especially if not a professed politician, was a tyrant or an incendiary at his heart, either disposed from feverish alarm for his property to restrain, imprison, and persecute his neighbour, or eager from envy, curiosity, or enthusiasm to subvert all established order and to realise the visionary theory of perfect equality among men. If any one had a grain of candour or moderation, it became his interest to conceal it. Consequently those who, like John Hunter, were not opposed to the Government of the day, appeared zealots and partizans

in its favour, and from real contagion or selfish compliance exhibited all the symptoms of earnestness and injustice belonging to that character. But such and other defects in John Hunter were deducible from causes not connected with the violence of the times.

Perhaps in his dogmatical spirit, and certainly both in the obscurity of his style and in his unbounded self-applause and vanity, he betrayed the infirmities which are often described as the invariable concomitants of a late education, followed by a sudden elevation to eminence and distinction. He told me once in so many words that he thought himself a greater man than Isaac Newton. The superiority he had acquired in his own branch demanded, he said, a more extraordinary union of qualities than any proficiency in mathematics or astronomy; and discoveries leading to a perfect knowledge of the human frame were infinitely more useful to mankind than any observation of the heavenly bodies could be.

A childish love of paradox, or an obstinate adherence to an opinion hastily enounced, made him deny the efficacy of mineral springs. He contended that an artificial mixture of the same ingredients, or even the pure element alone heated to the same degree of temperature, would produce the same effects as Bath waters taken at the spot. Whenever they failed to do so, it was, he maintained, the fault of imagination. He assured me, in proof of this opinion, that to one patient in London (I think his own wife) he had prescribed common hot water, allowing it to be so, without any success; but that when he had filled Bath bottles with the same water and pretended that they were received by the coach, she, after boiling them, derived all the benefit from them that

she had expected from a course of the real waters drunk fresh at the Pump Room.

He had always a large belief in the influence of the mind over the body, and recounted many singular instances within his own observation where physical phenomena were to be traced exclusively to mental weakness or mental exertion. I know not whether he considered the following incident, which I had from his own lips, as any confirmation of his theory in his own person. While engaged in inquiries in Natural History, he kept a tiger or lion (I forget which) chained to a cage or kennel at the bottom of the yard. As he was sitting one hot day, as was his custom, slipshod in his back parlour, with the window door half open before him, he perceived the fierce animal disencumber his neck of his collar, and, finding himself unrestrained, prepared to spring over the wall of the adjoining yard. John Hunter, alarmed at the mischief which might ensue, and without any consideration of what he was doing, issued from the room, seized the beast by his neck or mane, and quietly reconducted him to his place of confinement, where the animal permitted him to refix the chain without the least symptom of resistance. When this feat was thus fortunately accomplished, John Hunter returned to the house ; but he had scarcely passed the threshold when the recollection of the danger he had voluntarily encountered and miraculously escaped suddenly rushed on his mind, and overpowered him with such terror and amazement that he fell senseless on the floor, and did not recover for some minutes. He laboured under a disease particularly alarming to a person subject to such violent emotions, *viz.*, an affection of the heart, which he told me and others would one day kill him going upstairs or in a passion. The prediction was, it is



said, verified in the latter shape; he expired in the act of repelling a contradiction which had provoked him.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever were his foibles and imperfections as a man, a surgeon, and a writer, his inventive genius and unremitting zeal in the investigation of anatomical truths rendered his life highly useful to the world, and promoted the science which tends more directly than any other to mitigate the sufferings incident to our species. He left several MSS. Many think that they should have been conveyed to Surgeons' Hall, together with the Museum, and were in equity, at least, included in the purchase. The fact that they have been destroyed has excited some disappointment and more indignation among men of science, some of whom, however, have insinuated that the benefit of any discoveries they may have contained has not been lost to the world, but may be found in the papers and publications of his brother-in-law and executor, who destroyed them in their original shape without any acknowledgment to the inventor.

John Hunter was neither polished in his manner nor refined in his expression, but from originality of thought and earnestness of mind he was extremely agreeable in conversation; at least, to me, in whom he somewhat hastily and very erroneously inferred a turn for studies congenial to his own, from the very unfeigned homage he perceived me to pay to his talents and celebrity. His countenance was indeed full of genius. The observation of Lavater on the engraving from the admirable

<sup>1</sup> [He was flatly contradicted by one of his colleagues when speaking at a board meeting at St. George's Hospital. He retired to an adjoining room, where he almost immediately fell dead.]

portrait of him by Sir Joshua Reynolds, "That man thinks for himself," must have occurred to less professed physiognomists in every casual intercourse with the original.

I visited Lavater himself<sup>1</sup> in 1791 in Switzerland. He then enjoyed great celebrity throughout Europe. His fanciful theories, though never admitted by men of reflection, were yet the subject of some study and more curiosity, especially among artists. If it was a rash attempt in him to reduce physiognomy to a science, he had himself some good personal reasons for inculcating a faith in the impressions produced by the countenance and figure of a man. His own bespoke no little intelligence and yet greater benevolence. He was, I believe, an enthusiast in religion, and probably, in his pretended science, the sincere dupe of his own ingenuity. However, like other professors of similar sciences, he delighted in delineating the characters of those whose qualities had been reported to him by common fame or were actually known to him by familiar intercourse, rather than of those to whose peculiarities he had no guide but such as their features furnished him with. He gave, for instance, a sketch of Mr. Fox, whom he had seen at Berne in 1788; but of Mr. Windham, who was with him at that time, and who was remarkable for a characteristic countenance and appearance, he made no delineation. The fame of Mr. Fox's eloquence and abilities had reached Lavater, but Mr. Windham's celebrity as an orator was, at that time, confined to England, and the philosopher thought it indiscreet to trust to his visionary prognostics of disposition and

<sup>1</sup> [Johann Gaspar Lavater (1741—1801), the famous physiognomist, and a minister at Zurich. He was wounded during the capture of that town by Massena in 1799, and died from the effects.]

talents, when he had no previous clue from public notoriety or private information to guide him in his researches.

There was, indeed, one celebrated Englishman then resident in the same country, whose appearance would have baffled him—Mr. Gibbon, the historian. His friends, with more zeal to gratify public curiosity than kindness to him, have been at great pains to preserve drawings and descriptions of his disgusting figure and revolting features. They are not caricatures. His countenance expressed neither quickness nor reflection. No man could have surmised from his inanimate yet hideous face that he possessed such powers of application and such faculties of wit and reasoning as his works unquestionably display, and as observant persons might have discovered, though in much fainter lines, in his conversation. His devotion to letters was the most estimable part of his character. It gives great interest to his memoirs, which are entertaining and instructive. As to affections, he seems to have had none. He was more like what he admired and produced, a large book, than a living member of society.

He was affected in his manner and sometimes ludicrously vain. I have been told that he imagined himself handsome. When somebody, presuming on that foible, ventured to try the extent of his conceit by telling him he was like Mr. Fox, whose face, full of kindness and intelligence, had nothing in common with his but a sallow complexion and dark eyebrows, Gibbon pettishly replied, "that any likeness to Mr. Fox in understanding or disposition he should deem an honour, but he could not be flattered with a supposed, and he hoped a mistaken, resemblance to his person." Even in the latter period of his life he



occasionally hinted at his amorous propensities, and invited his friends to banter him on supposed but impossible debaucheries. More human senses than one must have been suspended in his favour, to render his enormous and disgusting complaint imperceptible to his friends and acquaintance.

His want of principle in politics was obvious enough from the incidents of his life, but it was an odd act of friendship in Lord Sheffield<sup>1</sup> to furnish the public with so many proofs of it from his correspondence. There is an anecdote respecting his acceptance of a seat at the Board of Trade, which, though rather of a political than literary cast, I will relate here. Mr. Fox wrote in a presentation copy of the first volume of the *Roman History* words to this effect: "This gentleman told me on the Monday that no good would be done till the heads of Lord North and his colleagues were laid on the table of the House of Commons, and on the Saturday the same gentleman accepted a place under Lord North." Some years afterwards an execution took place in Mr. Fox's house. He had consigned his books to another person; but the creditors contended the books were his, and the question was tried in the Common Pleas, where Lord Loughborough, a particular friend of Mr. Gibbon, presided. The counsel for the creditors argued that the books really belonged to Mr. Fox, from notes in his handwriting being found in the blank leaves. Some question arose on the admissibility of the notes as evidence; the Court seemed inclined to admit them. But when, in the course of the argument, the book had been handed up to Lord Loughborough, the friend prevailed over

<sup>1</sup> [John Baker Holroyd, first Earl of Sheffield (1735—1821), who edited Gibbon's *Miscellaneous Works* and *Memoirs*.]

the judge, and he earnestly, if not peremptorily, prevented the public perusal of them.

The song on Gibbon's acceptance of office,<sup>1</sup> which begins :

King George in a fright  
Lest Gibbon should write  
The story of Britain's disgrace, etc.

was erroneously ascribed by common report to Mr. Fox. It was, I believe, one among the many effusions of General FitzPatrick, who, if he fell at all short in bitter, sarcastic humour, equalled in wit and excelled in taste and refinement, as well as in harmony, the political poet of the preceding generation, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams.

Gibbon had lived in some familiarity with the society that surrounded Mr. Fox, although they were neither sparing of their censures on his political tergiversation nor very indulgent to his affectations in writing and conversation. It was he who first introduced Mr. Sheridan to Mr. Fox, after the former had written *The Rivals*.<sup>2</sup>

During the two days I had the advantage of passing

<sup>1</sup> [In 1779. The remaining lines of the stanza are :

Thought no way so sure  
His pen to secure,  
As to give the historian a place.

Wraxall says that, notwithstanding Lord Holland's contradiction of the fact, he always understood that the verses were of Mr. Fox's composition.]

<sup>2</sup> So Sheridan told me, but Lord John Townshend assures me it is a mistake,\* and that Mr. Fox, anxious to make Sheridan's acquaintance, prevailed upon Lord John to give them a dinner at the St. Albans Tavern, where these two great orators met one another for the first time.—V.H.

\* "Jack Townshend called it by a coarser name," one which I am afraid he has never much scruple in applying to Mr. Sheridan's assertions,—V.H.

with Mr. Gibbon at Lausanne, he dwelt with much complacency on a variety of anecdotes and *bon mots* of persons with whom I had been familiar from my childhood. Many of them I had heard before from others, and most, if not all of them, I should judge by his studied manner of relating them, adjusting, as he did most carefully, the rap of his snuff-box and the twist of his finger and thumb to the point of the jest, he had been in the habit of frequently repeating. They were, however, diverting, instructive, and well told. I remember that among them he recited some verses of Mr. Hare. Full of vivacity, humour, and fancy as was that most ready and brilliant of all fashionable wits, he seldom committed any specimen of his talents to paper, either in verse or prose.

From the variety, therefore, if not the merit, of such a performance, the rhymes which Gibbon recollected and I afterwards ascertained to be authentic, may be acceptable to my reader. Mr. Hare, from the want of a better office, had been destined by his friend and early schoolfellow, Mr. Fox, during one of his short Ministries, to the mission to Warsaw; and he thereupon vented his sense of the necessity but disagreeableness of the appointment, almost extempore, in the following lines:

Having been born to no land,  
'Tis thought that I must go to Poland;  
So having long exhausted all tick,  
I soon, alas! must cross the Baltic.  
Of all the towns I read of or saw,  
I least expected seeing Warsaw:  
And now 'tisn't ten to one<sup>1</sup> I a'nt sick  
Before I ever get to Dantzic.

With the exception of some very trifling *jeux d'esprit*, the above are, I believe, the only verses Mr. Hare

<sup>1</sup> Query: 'Tis scarcely odds.—V.H.



ever wrote, or at least acknowledged, after he had left school, where, if I mistake not, he distinguished himself by an English exercise.

Having thus incidentally mentioned Mr. Hare, I will endeavour to give some notion of him here, for his wit and *bon mots*, exquisite and delightful as they were, were not of a kind that bear repetition, nor such as the recollection of the events of the day or the state of parties brings back naturally to one's mind. He was, indeed, all fire and fancy. His starting eyes and eager countenance seemed animated, and his slender frame emaciated, by the vivacity of his genius [and] his keen sense of ridicule; and the felicity of his language was inspired by the earnestness with which he felt what he expressed. His knowledge was confined to scholarship and *belles lettres*; his judgment, except in matters of taste and language, was not very remarkable; and his temper was always impetuous, and occasionally fretful. It rarely disfigured his manners, but it not unfrequently gave such an edge of severity to his wit, as raised more sympathy for his victim and perhaps more terror than delight and admiration in his audience. In short, he was occasionally unmerciful. His vanity, disciplined and chastised by good breeding and good taste, never exposed him to ridicule; but when mortified it inflicted, I suspect, some bitter sufferings in private and revenged itself on some subsequent occasion by pitiless retaliation on those who had offended him.

Of his birth and family I knew little. His father, who was, I believe, an apothecary at Bristol,<sup>1</sup> died insolvent before, or soon after, his son had left Eton. He consequently entered life almost without property. He had no connections but such as his merits procured

<sup>1</sup> [At Winchester.]

him at school, at college, and in the world. If, as Horace affirms, the favour and friendship of distinguished men constitute no slight commendation, no person in English society ever earned a larger portion of that reward in a manner more honourable to himself than Mr. Hare. He married, indeed, early in life, a lady (Miss Hume) with some money but no beauty, and he was soon separated from her, but on terms which, I believe, even her friends acknowledged to be handsome and liberal on his part. Indeed, in all *pecuniary* transactions he conducted himself, even in the narrowest circumstances, with great honour and disinterestedness. His figure, without deformity, was neither robust nor elegant. His face, though full of animation and exempt from any bad expression, was not prepossessing. Yet to the honour of female judgment in wit and conversation, more, I fear, than to the happiness of those to whom he devoted his attentions, few men were more successful in gallantry with no external advantages. He dazzled and captivated women of beauty, talent, and condition, by the brilliancy of his wit, the vivacity of his imagination, and a natural, unaffected earnestness of manner, in which there was not the slightest tinge of vulgarity or ill-breeding. But as, with due preservation of the forms of society, he could be unmerciful to men who had offended him, so I am afraid that, without departing from the rules of good company, he was occasionally sarcastic, cutting, and even cruel, to those of the other sex who had had the imprudence of pleasing him too much. He was, in truth, from over refinement, too exquisitely sensitive and fastidious not to tease himself and others with unnecessary reproaches.

In politics he was a follower and almost a

worshipper of Mr. Fox.<sup>1</sup> He had himself never thought seriously on matters of State or principles of government, but affection and gratitude attached him to any opinion or party that his friend adopted. He measured all men's political merits and even talents by the degree of devotion they paid to Mr. Fox. He never attempted to speak in Parliament but once. It was on a point of order, in which his friend had been attacked. Rage almost choked his utterance, and, as he used to relate, Mr. Fox, on his sitting down, greeted him with a remark, more frank and natural than encouraging, "What a fine, passionate fellow you are!"<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, the part he took in politics was very far from being indifferent or unuseful to the cause he espoused or the friend he adhered to. He devoted his wit and conversation to their service. The keenness with which he, in private, exposed the fallacies and disparaged the abilities of the adversary, came wonderfully in aid of the public and more serious exertions of the leader, to inspire his followers with zeal for his person and with indignation and even contempt for his most formidable opponents. If many were convinced by Mr. Fox in the House of Commons that the logic of the Minister was inconclusive and the measures of Government pernicious, not a few, especially of the young members of his party, were equally wrought upon at supper at Brookes', where several of his early friends, and Mr. Hare in particular, were wont to descant on the incidents of the debate, to extol their supporters, and run down their

<sup>1</sup> His bust is placed among those of the friends of Mr. Fox in the Temple of Liberty at Woburn Abbey.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [It is related that Fox, when receiving congratulations on his first speech in Parliament, remarked, "Wait until you hear Hare."]



adversaries. How often, heated with the enthusiasm which conviviality, wit, and a common cause inspire, have we left the room half persuaded that Mr. Pitt was an empty declaimer, and his speech of that night beneath criticism or even contempt!

I record these practices, whether laudable or blameworthy, merely to mark the difference which a change in the habits of society has insensibly wrought in political parties. Private dinners, tavern suppers, convivial meetings, perhaps intemperance itself, constituted a large portion of the ways and means of public men some thirty or forty years ago. But our usages have been altered. Social intercourse is no longer confined to those *qui idem sentiunt de republicâ*. The comparative disuse of men dinners, improving no doubt the intercourse of private life, has nevertheless very sensibly impaired the strength and union of party zeal and connection.

To return to Gibbon. He was naturally a great object of veneration in the small town of Lausanne, in which he resided: and he enjoyed the superiority his celebrity gave him. If he did not positively exact, he very complacently accepted, from all classes, such homage as is rarely offered but to Royalty or power. No amusement commenced where he was expected until he had made his appearance. Poets impatient to read their works, ladies equally so to display their musical talents, and all convened to partake of the Swiss collations called *thés* or *goûtées*, generally suspended the indulgence of their respective wishes till the presence and sanction of the great historian allowed them to begin. I have been assured that if the practice was ever departed from, the oracles and responses of the idol never failed to betray, although with becoming gentleness, that

he had remarked the omission. Such a life was more suited to his taste, as well as to his bodily powers, than either Parliament or the Militia. He dwells, however, with some complacency on the latter in his memoirs. He manifestly entertained some pompous notions of the military knowledge he had acquired in the country quarters of the Hampshire. Indeed, in the MS., chiefly written in French, he betrayed, according to Lord Sheffield, who showed me the passage, the same predilection for his war-like achievements. On his first acquaintance with Lord Sheffield, then Mr. Holroyd, he writes: "Holroyd est un homme d'esprit, mais un peu suffisant. Il a tous les préjuges de son état (he was a Dragoon officer) *contre la Milice*." Some less partial persons might perhaps have thought that the unfavourable clause of the judgment, thus pronounced, was perfectly intelligible without further explanation, but Lord Sheffield himself accounted for it thus. He was fresh from England when he met Gibbon at Paris. The *Mayor of Garralt* had just come out on the London theatre. Lord Sheffield was full of it. He described Foote in Major Sturgeon, mimicked him in parts of the character, and repeated all the jokes against train bands and Militia, with which the dialogue abounds. Gibbon, still in the Hampshire, grew half angry, inveighed against the licentiousness of the stage, and seriously maintained that such satires on the national force of a free country should not be endured.

It would be hardly just to myself and to my sense of literary merit to close my true though flippant account of Gibbon's person, manners, and character, without bearing the tribute of my admiration, insignificant as it is, to his immortal work. I have lately (1835) read it for the third time, with some

attention ; and, in my judgment, his unwearied search for historical truth, and his yet more rare and discriminating impartiality in discerning it, place him in the very first rank of historians. He is one of the chief ornaments of his age and country. To whatever strictures his speculative opinions and somewhat indulgent morality may expose him from the religious and the austere, none can doubt his humanity, question his sincerity, or deny the justness of his views, without betraying their own want [of] candour, sincerity, or judgment.

It is curious that, in the same corps with that great writer and at the same time, another learned, though less eminent, historian was serving as a subaltern. This was Mr. Mitford,<sup>1</sup> elder brother of Lord Redesdale, and author of the *History of Greece*. He, like Gibbon, was somewhat fatigued with his regimental duties, and consulted him how to dispel his *ennui* by any rational pursuit. Gibbon advised him to read, study, and *write* history ; I believe he suggested Greece as the subject. The first volume, in point of labour, ingenuity, and critical acumen, does credit to the advice, and may vie with the works of the adviser himself. But before the second was published the French Revolution had intervened. Mitford, though a retired man, was virulent in his politics. His detestation of the Republicans and reformers of his own day, combining with a propensity to paradox inherent in his nature, induced him to extol the tyrants whom the orators and historians of Greece have consigned to the execration of mankind, and to detract from the acts of heroism and models of oratory which the world has been taught for ages to regard as the most signal triumphs of patriotism and genius.

<sup>1</sup> [William Mitford (1744—1827).]



Among the literary anecdotes related to us at Lausanne by Gibbon, there were several that proved the superficial information of modern travellers generally, and of Coxe, of King's,<sup>1</sup> afterwards known by the nickname of "Quarto" Coxe, in particular. He had been travelling tutor to Lord Pembroke, Mr. Whitbread, and others. The exorbitance of his salaries for such services was a common subject of ridicule in the University of Cambridge. So much so, that in a puppetshow Punch was introduced complaining or bragging of the high price he paid for a fashionable bear-leader. When questioned who he was, he replied, "Who but Cocksh, of King's!"—a piece of buffoonery which the reverend object of it was so ill-advised as to resent, and he solicited the Vice-Chancellor to put it down by authority. Whatever were his gains as tutor, he was not satisfied with them. He strove to draw from every journey he made fresh profit, by transferring each item of information he picked up, from whatever source derived, into a book of travels. He had as little discrimination and delicacy in collecting as in retailing his intelligence. An anecdote which suited his book was as welcome on the authority of a *laquais de place*, as from that of a Minister of State: and on the other hand he questioned the latter character, if admitted to his company, with as little scruple as the former.

Gibbon was full of stories of his impudence and of proofs of his inaccuracy. His sins, however, he said, had been visited by a species of retributive justice, which had injured the sale of his books. No sooner had his travels in Russia appeared than they had been abridged and corrected by an abler pen, whose

<sup>1</sup> [William Coxe (1747—1828), fellow of King's College, Cambridge,]

production superseded the original publication ; and his book upon Switzerland had been followed by a French translation, with the notes of a well-informed Swiss, which was more convenient to the traveller and more instructive to the student than the English volumes of Coxe. He lived to an advanced age, and continued to the last to load our shelves with compositions or compilations of history and biography ; for, being a thoughtless and hospitable man, as well as an intrepid writer, he was compelled, notwithstanding his Archdeaconry and some good Church preferment, to adhere to his trade of bookmaking. In default of judgment he had great experience, some sort of felicity in the choice of his subject, great industry, or rather importunity, in procuring materials, though with an utter want of discrimination in selecting, and yet greater in using or reasoning upon, such facts as he collected. Of his rapidity in determining on laborious works without any previous knowledge of the subjects whatever, and of his activity in begging and purloining documents for his new undertaking, many ludicrous stories are related ; of his slender capacity of using them every reader must be aware, and the posthumous production which lies on my table, as I write this in 1829, proves that his judgment did not improve with his years.<sup>1</sup>

That his selection from papers and correspondence was as injudicious as his comment, may be inferred from one fact, that Sir James Mackintosh, who followed him in his researches through many private correspondences, seldom found that Coxe and himself marked the same paper or passage in common for transcription. Yet his labours were not altogether unuseful. His assiduity in discovering hidden or unheeded papers,

<sup>1</sup> [*Memoirs of the Administrations of Henry Pelham.*]

and his indelicacy in applying for the loan or perusal of them, dragged some valuable documents into light; and the easy access he found to them directed subsequent and better historians to the sources of intelligence yet extant in private and family collections. He never lived with literary men of much note, and his society during his latter years was for the most part within [the] close of Salisbury, of which cathedral he was a Prebendary.

He had seen, however, during his residence, two Bishops, who in different ways were eminent for their scholarship. I mean Dr. Douglas<sup>1</sup> and Dr. Burgess.<sup>2</sup> The last is a mere bookworm; but though a bad critic, he is a laborious and learned man. He is more active in, what they call at college, sporting paradoxes than ingenious in maintaining them. But though singularly tenacious of his opinions, he formed them himself. Narrow as they are, they are his own, and adopted without any suggestion of others, or, I believe, any view of power or profit. He is chiefly remarkable, although little remarked, for publishing a larger number of dull polemical pamphlets in favour of exploded opinions in criticism, politics, and religion than any person of his cloth, and certainly than any or all the Bishops of the Bench. It is fair to add that, if not candid, he is temperate in argument and quite exempt from that irritability which such controversies usually either denote or create.

Dr. Douglas, who was not his immediate predecessor,

<sup>1</sup> [John Douglas, D.D. (1721—1807); Bishop of Carlisle, 1787—1791; and of Salisbury, 1791—1807. He was the origin of the discovery of the forgeries of William Lauder, who accused Milton of imitating the works of the seventeenth-century Latin poets, and who, to prove his case, had produced garbled and inaccurate quotations.]

<sup>2</sup> [Thomas Burgess, D.D. (1756—1837); Bishop of St. David's; 1803—1825; and of Salisbury, 1825—1837.]



was a very different and very superior man. He had been private secretary to Pulteney, Lord Bath. His detection of Lauder's forgeries against Milton is well known. I speak from my own experience when I mention him as liberal in his dealings, and from particular as well as general report when I represent him as amiable, agreeable, and simple, though somewhat irascible in his disposition. His learning was considerable, and he combined with it the taste of a poet and the acumen of a critic. Though in principle and connection rather a Tory than a Whig, he obtained the good opinion of Mr. Fox, who felt for his judgment in literary matters something nearly approaching to admiration. Indeed, his estimation in the club where Mr. Fox occasionally met him, in the company of Dr. Johnson, Mr. Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Sir William Scott,<sup>1</sup> would raise a fair presumption that he was no ordinary man, even if the direct testimony of his writings and of his son (a person himself of strong understanding) did not abundantly justify my favourable report.

Before I became a member of that celebrated club, he, as well as the yet greater luminaries of it, were no more.<sup>2</sup> But as I had two uncles Mr. Fox and Lord Ossory, who generally attended, and as I was well acquainted in my childhood with Sir Joshua Reynolds, who never missed a meeting, I was familiar with the

<sup>1</sup> [William Scott, Lord Stowell (1745—1836), son of a coal-merchant in Newcastle. Barrister; and Judge of the High Court of the Admiralty, 1798—1828. He was knighted in 1788, and was raised to the peerage in 1821. His friendship with Dr. Johnson dated back to their Oxford days.]

<sup>2</sup> [The original Literary Club, or "The Club," founded in 1763, and held at the Turk's Head, Gerrard Street, Soho, till 1783. It was originally a weekly supper, but after 1772 it became a fortnightly dinner during the Parliamentary Session. Late in 1783 Dr. Johnson formed another club, held at the Essex Head in Essex Street.]

style and character of the society which composed it from the earliest period of my life. The origin of the institution may be collected from Boswell; Johnson was its founder, object, and oracle. Even now, though dignified by some with a more aspiring title, the members less ostentatiously and more correctly term it "Johnson's Club." He attended long as the living idol, and when he was no more it continued to be the favourite shrine at which his worshippers offered, in the shape of anecdotes and quotations, their incense to his memory. In such rites Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Windham, and Sir William Scott successively officiated as High Priests, and the conversation of the two last, in addition to other attractions, derived no little lustre in that place from the knowledge of their early study and admiration of him. Sir Joshua, equally a worshipper, had been long distinguished in one branch of excellence peculiarly and exclusively his own. Being, too, one of the earliest, if not of the original, members of the club, he seemed to depend less on the respect cherished for Johnson than on his own merits as an artist and philosopher.

He was surely the greatest painter England ever produced. Even in his blemishes there was thought, grace, and genius. His pictures, if duly studied, elucidate the great truth which his conversation and writings so earnestly and pleasantly inculcated, namely, that, to attain excellence in the arts of imitation, intellect and fancy as well as observation and diligence, are requisite. Though neither fluent nor grammatically correct in his familiar language, he had acquired a habit from his intimacy with Johnson and Burke that reminded one of the reported conversations of those two extraordinary

men, and proved that he was one of their school. This consisted in a perpetual and often successful endeavour to draw some general inference from casual facts or remarks mentioned in conversation. He would account for them by some moral maxim or make them subservient to the proof of some principle. He had not only caught this manner of philosophising, but had studiously imitated it, partly for his instruction and partly for his diversion.

I remember he repeated to me and my sister, in a journey we made with him from Bedfordshire to London, a composition of his own in a supposed dialogue between Johnson and Boswell. The affected simplicity and deference and the real sycophancy of the disciple, as well as the ponderous humour, contemptuous tone, and sterling good sense of the Master, mingled with playful rudeness, were throughout very happily preserved. The topic was the intellectual powers of Garrick. Johnson was made, according to his custom, to disparage them, and yet more those of his injudicious admirer, Boswell, most unmercifully. It ended, I think, nearly thus :

*B.* "Surely, Sir, he is a great man?"

*J.* "No, Sir. He is *not* a great man. Garrick, a great man indeed! Let us have no more of such stuff."

*B.* "You will allow him, at least, to be great in one line—a great actor?"

*J.* "Aye, Sir, but what of that? There are many things great. There are great merchants, great sportsmen, great brewers, great grocers, great actors, and great fools; Davy Garrick for aught I know or care is the last but one, and you, Bozzy (laughing immoderately), may be the last if you like it."

This propensity in Johnson to detract from the



merits of Garrick, to deride and scoff at his profession, and to expose without mercy the infirmities of his character, was well known, and has often been adduced as proofs of his envy, malignity, and ingratitude, by the friends of that lively man and inimitable actor. For Johnson, as they urged, was Garrick's hero.

Judge, O ye Gods, how dearly Garrick loved him ;

and thence they drew an inference that Johnson was a brute to stab him with such merciless severity. John Kemble, however, who never loved Garrick, and suspected him, on very slight grounds, of having been jealous of Mrs. Siddons, pretended that he had frequently insulted his old master and friend by a studious and pompous display of his wealth.

As an instance of this purse-proud insolence and assumed superiority, he related that when Johnson complimented Garrick upon his tea, and owned that he envied his success in nothing more sensibly than in being able to purchase so exquisite a beverage, Garrick not only smiled complacently, but added that the tea so admired was by no means the best he had ; he possessed some far more refined, but he reserved it for his fashionable guests (naming Sir John this or Lord that). This affectation of superiority Johnson resented so highly, that he wrote the two hundredth Number of the *Rambler* the very next day, and he stigmatised therein the folly and insolence of men suddenly enriched, under the character of Prospero, with signal severity, introducing the anecdote of the tea to make the popular player feel that the portrait was intended for him.

Sir Joshua's *Dialogue* seems to preserve the recollection without recording the excuse for such

a practice in Johnson. It was printed somewhere about the year 1801 by Lady Thomond.<sup>1</sup> It was always the fashion to say that the *Discourses* of Sir Joshua had been corrected and retouched by Johnson. That great writer died, and the continued beauty of the *Discourses* confuted the supposition. But the public, ever grudging fame in two lines of excellence at a time, hardily maintained that Burke assisted Sir Joshua Reynolds, and, to borrow a metaphor from art, draped the figures of the artist's rhetoric.

It is, however, my firm belief that he was less assisted in his writings than in his pictures. In the mechanical and inferior parts of the latter he certainly employed very largely Northcote, Marchi, and other scholars by no means incapable of extending their labours to the more finished portions of the piece—a fact I would not invidiously record, if it were not, I fear, equally true that munificence or even friendliness to such assistants formed no part of his otherwise amiable character. My opinion that his writings are his own is chiefly founded on his conversation. That uniformly bespoke an ingenious and sprightly mind, unwearied in exercising itself in the principles and philosophy of art, and consequently well stored with the materials of which his *Discourses* are composed. It is true that he did not disdain in talk to give a paradoxical turn to his sound opinions on such subjects. I remember, when fresh from school, I heard with astonishment this great judge, proficient in the “beautiful,” declare that Vanbrugh was, in a painter's

<sup>1</sup> Miss Mary Palmer (1750—1820), niece of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who married, in 1792, Murrough, first Marquess of Thomond. Sir Walter Armstrong, in his *Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, states that the *Dialogue* was first printed privately in 1816.

eye, the best of architects, and that Holland, with its dykes and canals, was the most picturesque country in Europe. This way of enforcing just principles by phrases seemingly paradoxical was, no doubt, devised to give point and relish to his conversation, and to invite discussion on his favourite topics. It answered its purpose. The practice taught him an arch, playful, and delicate manner of insinuating philosophical tasks.

When one of his vulgar employers objected to the price of a portrait, saying, "Seventy guineas is a large sum, Sir Joshua, for three or four hours' labour, and you have not spent five on this picture." "Not five hours?" (exclaimed he). "Why, I have been nearly all my life about it!"<sup>1</sup> Even in parrying just criticism on his defects, he would contrive to inculcate some maxim generally applicable to his art. I saw his great picture of *The Death of Cardinal Beaufort*<sup>2</sup> on his easel, and some friends of his availed themselves of the presence of a schoolboy to convey their criticism, by setting me on to ask why he had not shown us King Henry VI.'s face, which is covered by his arm raised to bless the expiring Prelate. He perceived the drift of the question, which I who put it was not aware of, and archly replied, "Aye, now, I'm glad you asked that question, for I shall teach something about art. That very omission which surprises you, the want of the King's face, is a great part of my skill. Had it been there, you would have looked at him instead of the Cardinal, to whom it was my business to direct your eye. The contrivance how to hide Henry's face cost me, I can tell you,

<sup>1</sup> The story is told of Annibal Caracci; and if Sir Joshua said it, as I have been often assured he did, he stole it from the same biographical account of that painter.—V.H.

<sup>2</sup> [The picture is at Petworth, and belongs to Lord Leconfield,]



more trouble and thought than half the picture besides and than the painting twenty such kings would have done." My prompters were probably not quite satisfied that indolence had no share in the determination, but they laughed at the promptitude with which he detected and answered the censure, and they must have felt the truth of the general principle involved in his ingenious defence.

In that picture is a figure on which Mr. Fox loved to descant whenever he praised Sir Joshua. "None," he said, "but a man of genius could have conceived, and none but one of consummate skill could have executed, such a design." It is an inferior attendant looking through the door, whose countenance, on observing the agonies of the Cardinal, expresses forcibly, but almost ludicrously, his persuasion that all is not as it should be, and that, if the truth were known, it is a very bad piece of business. What more natural? What better contrived to tell the story? If the sentiment is somewhat more comic than one should expect on so terrible an occasion, the inferior character, as well as position, of the person expressing it prevents its impairing in the slightest degree the horror and sublimity of the remorse in the principal figure.

The prosperity and cheerfulness of Sir Joshua Reynolds have often been remarked. He was familiar with the great, though no favourite at Court, for the King<sup>1</sup> was too insensible to genius to admire his works, and too deficient in knowledge or philosophy to enjoy his society. But though royal taste patronised other artists, Sir Joshua was honoured by the multitude and intimate with the men of his day most eminent for judgment or acquirements in science,

literature, politics, law, or divinity. It was not, therefore, a mere hyperbolical flourish in Mr. Burke, when eulogising him after the funeral at St. Paul's, to style him the pattern of human happiness in temper, profession, fortune, and fame. It was, on the contrary, natural in the orator, at such an era of political dissension, to contrast the career of an artist, soothed with the breath of flattery and wafted along by rank, fortune, fashion, and talent to prosperity and fame, even to the close of the scene, with the less enviable life of a statesman, too often shattered in its long and lingering decay by the loss of its branches, and exposed with declining strength to the assaults of enmity and detraction.

But such a panegyric, like a good portrait, had on that occasion the merit of particular resemblance as well as of general truth. Reynolds was prosperous in his life and cheerful in his temper. It is possible that he might not be, at all seasons, quite exempt from that jealousy to which artists are so particularly liable. In mitigation, however, if not in contradiction, to such insinuations against him, I can myself bear testimony to his speaking frequently of Gainsborough in terms of kindness and admiration; of Wilson, whom he is supposed to have disliked personally, with high commendation; and even of Romney, whom a set of minor wits were industrious in extolling at his expense, with full acknowledgment of his peculiar merits, and with ample praise of his talents as a draughtsman. It is somewhat strange that neither he nor the connoisseurs of that day, though earnest even to affectation in extolling the genius of Hogarth, ever spoke of that extraordinary man as a great colourist.

It was reserved for the exhibition in Pall Mall about

the year 1820<sup>1</sup> to procure him a reputation, which his arrogant pretensions as a critic and his unsuccessful attempt at a yet higher order of excellence in *Sigismonda*<sup>2</sup> lost him for near fifty years. He was for a long time, though very preposterously, considered as a mere caricaturist, the first, indeed, and father of that line in England, but of the same race as Bunbury, or even Sayer and Gillray, who devoted their skill in that diverting but not difficult branch of art, and furnished our print shops with political caricatures. Neither they nor Bunbury aspired to the character of painters.

The only artist of my time, who could aspire to anything like a competition with Hogarth, was Goya<sup>3</sup> in Spain. There is spirit and even genius in his designs, but they are generally extravagant and sometimes unintelligible. He lacks that inimitable knowledge of human nature and character, which made Horace Walpole class Hogarth with great writers of comedy. Goya's portraits on canvas are said to be extremely good. In 1809 there existed one at Jadrague, of Don Gaspar Melchior de Jovellanos,<sup>4</sup> who, in addition to his

<sup>1</sup> [Lord Holland probably refers to an exhibition of Hogarth's pictures held in the Gallery of the British Institution in 1814, succeeding one of the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds' in the preceding year.]

<sup>2</sup> Yet with all its defects it is a well-coloured (piece) picture.

To the reader of my MS., perhaps the double sense of my original word in the above note made it a more correct description of the work, but for that very reason I expunge it.—V.H.

[The picture is now in the National Gallery, to which it was bequeathed, in 1879, by Mr. J. H. Anderdon. Hogarth attempted to follow the lines of Correggio in the composition.]

<sup>3</sup> [Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes (1746—1828). He was born of humble parents in a small village in Aragon, and never studied painting till after the age of sixteen. He spent some years in Rome, and returned to Spain in 1774.]

<sup>4</sup> [Don Gaspar Melchior de Jovellanos (1744—1811), statesman and poet. He was a member of the Supreme Junta during the first years of the Peninsular War, and took an active part in the direction



other attainments, was a connoisseur in painting, and has inserted many articles in *La Biblioteca de las bellas artes* full of interest to the lovers of art or biography.

I first made acquaintance with that remarkable man, in 1793, at Gijon. To that town, his native place, he had been sent with some commission, to an honourable exile, soon after the death of Campomanes. That Minister, himself an Asturian, had not failed to distinguish the rising genius of Jovellanos. Both were proficient in political economy, but it was not in such useful and severe studies alone that Jovellanos acquired a reputation. Works of criticism, a drama of great merit (the *Delinquente Honrado*), and a satire entitled *Pan y Toros*, generally ascribed to him, proved the versatility of his talents, the correctness of his taste, and the purity of his style. His conversation was equally delightful—clear, perspicuous, and natural, and though not divested of playfulness and pleasantry, elevated and instructive. There was too much benevolence both of countenance and manner to impose any unpleasant restraint on the company, and yet an unaffected simplicity and a certain dignity and purity, both in language and sentiment, manifestly the offspring of an unblemished character and a philosophical mind, gave a tone of earnestness and propriety to conversation, such as is rarely preserved in the unrestricted dialogue of a southern society.

He was, I think, the only person eminent in literature, with whom I became acquainted in my first journey through Spain in 1793. I might, indeed, except the Abbé Cavanilles,<sup>1</sup> a botanist and topographical writer

of operations against the French. Joseph, when King of Spain, offered him the post of Minister, which he refused.]

<sup>1</sup> [Antonio Josef Cavanilles (1744—1804). He went to Paris with the Spanish Ambassador in 1777, and remained twelve years in France.]

of some fame, who was a *protégé* of the House of Infantado, a man of prepossessing manners, and a native of the Kingdom of Valencia, of which he published a description.

Lord St. Helens,<sup>1</sup> then Ambassador of Madrid, though of more refined taste and cultivated mind than was common at that time in the ranks of English diplomacy, never had his curiosity awakened to Spanish literature, nor was at the pains to open his house to such writers, scholars, or artists, as the country would have afforded. In Italy, however, where I spent the two next years, I frequented many societies where connoisseurs, scholars, and antiquaries abounded, who

Sui memores alios fecere merendo;

and however unpropitious that season of stormy politics was to the growth or cultivation of letters, I found many in different provinces of art, science, and literature.

In art, indeed, there were but few natives of Italy, and, if I except Canova,<sup>2</sup> not one who had either then or has since that time attained great celebrity. He was a man of simple, engaging manners, with all that gentleness which characterises Venetians, and with enough of the enthusiasm of an artist to give animation to his countenance and conversation. It would be tedious to enumerate artists, not Italians, though subsequent success may have implied merit in many of them. The list would be long. With the exception, however, of Fabre<sup>3</sup>—a successful pupil of David,

<sup>1</sup> [Alleyne Fitzherbert (1753—1839), created Lord St. Helens in 1791. Ambassador at Madrid, 1791—1794.]

<sup>2</sup> [Antonio Canova (1757—1822), the celebrated sculptor, born at Passagno, near Venice.]

<sup>3</sup> [François Xavier Fabre (1766—1837), a French painter of portraits]

but as furious an anti-revolutionary, as his master was a revolutionary politician, and better known as the lover, some say the third husband, of Madame D'Albany,<sup>1</sup> than as a painter—those I was acquainted with were chiefly English students.

Flaxman,<sup>2</sup> indeed, visited Italy while I was there. I am afraid I was more struck with the deformity of his person, the sanctity of his primitive manners, and the visionary turn of his opinions, than with his works or conversation; but the Italians had more sagacity than his countrymen, and discerned early the grand originality of his conceptions, his just ideas of beauty, and the real simplicity of his character. His sketches and models were studied as works of established excellence even then at Rome. He was, in truth, as Lord Egremont comically designated him, a prodigy of deformity and genius. If unequal, from bodily infirmity, to complete any great *chef d'œuvre* in sculpture, he contrived to enlighten his contemporaries and followers, and did more by his example and his drawings to improve art than any Englishman, Sir Joshua, in the sister branch, always excepted.

Natural philosophy, however, was the passion of the day, and geology, chemistry, and electricity the fashionable topics of conversation. I was myself far too ignorant to judge of the professors or proficient

and historical subjects. He lived almost entirely in Italy until 1826, when he returned to his native town of Montpellier, where he died. Several of his pictures are preserved at Holland House, including a portrait of Lord Holland, painted in 1796.]

<sup>1</sup> [Louise de Stolberg-Goedern, Countess D'Albany (1753—1824), widow of Prince Charles Edward, "the young Pretender." She lived for many years at Florence with Alfieri, the celebrated dramatist and poet, but seems never to have married him. After his death in 1803 she became attached to Fabre, and by her will left him everything she had.]

<sup>2</sup> [John Flaxman (1755—1826), sculptor and draughtsman,



in such studies: I never saw Spallanzani,<sup>1</sup> nor was I acquainted with Galvani,<sup>2</sup> whom I have met at Bologna. But of Fontana,<sup>3</sup> whose contemporary reputation was greater than the works he has left will maintain, I can speak from personal intercourse amounting almost to intimacy.

He was as remarkable for the boldness of his opinions as for the energy, eloquence, and ingenuity, with which he defended them. There had long existed in Tuscany a school of very free, not to say irreligious, philosophy. Cocchi was, if not the founder, a leading disciple in it. He had co-operated with the Grand Duke Leopold in suppressing both Jesuits and Inquisition, and in reducing the number, power, and wealth of the monastic institutions. Fontana, who, when young, had frequented Baron Holbach's society in Paris, was a professed materialist after the system of Helvetius. He naturally assumed the ascendancy among the free-thinkers of Florence, and, no doubt, more covertly favoured the political principles which Condorcet and other Frenchmen of the *Encyclopédie* had adopted. He was positive, vehement, and dogmatic, but far from unpleasant, in conversation; more remarkable, I suspect, for the natural vigour of his understanding than for the extent or accuracy of his knowledge in science

<sup>1</sup> [Lazaro Spallanzani (1729—1799), naturalist, and director of the Museum at Pavia.]

<sup>2</sup> [Aloisio Galvani (1737—1798), the discoverer of the action of electricity on the muscles of the human frame—a power called after his name. A native of Bologna, he became professor of that university in 1762, and remained until 1790, when he was deprived of his post because he refused, from religious scruples, to take the oath prescribed by the Cisalpine Republic.]

<sup>3</sup> [Fontana was born in 1730, and died at Florence in 1805. He was appointed Professor of Philosophy at Pisa by the Grand Duke Francis, but was recalled by the Grand Duke Leopold to Florence, and placed at the head of the Natural History Museum.]

or literature, over the whole range of which he somewhat presumptuously was wont to assert his dominion. He was well with the Grand Duke and his Minister, Manfredini. It was generally whispered in Florence, always the *città maldicente* that Dante describes, that he made an ungenerous use of his influence, that he checked rather than promoted the reward of others, and that he did not scruple to appropriate to himself their labours and discoveries.

Thus the anatomical man, composed of many thousand pieces of wood accurately representing parts of the human body in wood, was said to be the work of Fabroni,<sup>1</sup> the Sub-Director; although Fontana, the Director, was in the habit of exhibiting, explaining, and extolling it as his own. He had patronised Fabroni when very young, and introduced him into the institution from the stage, where he was, if not actually a dancer, connected with the ballet. But when the proficiency of the disciple attracted notice, the master was suspected of repressing him, from jealousy of attainments which were more than equal to his own; though in natural understanding, as well as Court favour, Fontana unquestionably maintained his superiority.

Fabroni was a Tuscan; Fontana, a native of Reveredo. Manfredini, who came from the latter place, also might have some prepossession in favour of Fontana; but his Tuscan origin could not fail to give his rising rival corresponding advantages in a society so narrowly national as that of Florence. Fontana had a brother, a monk and a professor at Pavia, where I saw him. He had the appearance as

<sup>1</sup> [Giovanni Fabroni (1752—1822), who succeeded Fontana as Director. He was appointed Overseer of the Roads and Bridges, by Napoleon, and to him is due the commencement of the Corniche road.]

well as name of a man of genius; but, suspected of republican principles, he was compelled to remove the aspersion by publications in the opposite extreme, and to consign his character to posterity as the strenuous and even acrimonious advocate of systems religious, moral, and political, which he loathed and abhorred. Hard is the lot of genius under arbitrary governments. Accordingly, the faculties best suited to the improvement of mankind are more desirous, on such soils, to withdraw than to force themselves into notice.

Parini,<sup>1</sup> the first poet and one of the most amiable men of that period, I never met. Monti<sup>2</sup> had not yet acquired such celebrity as was likely to attract a young traveller. The only literary man, within the Austrian dominions, whom I visited in 1795, was the Spanish ex-Jesuit Andrès,<sup>3</sup> more distinguished for laborious and impartial compilation than for critical acumen or original thought. He lived unmolested, but little known, in Mantua, and preferred publishing his works in Italian, though the subjects of which they treat and the good taste they inculcate would have been more useful and more novel to Spanish readers than to those who were familiar with Tiraboschi.<sup>4</sup>

There were, no doubt, many more men of letters in Venice and its dependencies, but I had not the advantage of knowing any but Cesarotti.<sup>5</sup> He was in appearance a grave, heavy, old-fashioned professor,

<sup>1</sup> [Giuseppe Parini (1729—1799), a native of Milan, whose chief work was *Il Giorno*, a satire.]

<sup>2</sup> [Vincenzo Monti (1754—1828), Italian lyric poet and dramatist.]

<sup>3</sup> [Juan Andrès (1740—1817).]

<sup>4</sup> [Girolamo Tiraboschi (1731—1794), an Italian author, who published a *History of Italian Literature*, etc.]

<sup>5</sup> [Melchiorre Cesarotti (1730—1808), Italian poet and professor of Greek and Hebrew at Padua. He translated *Ossian* into Italian blank verse.]



and his large tye wig resembled that which, in ridicule of his translation of Homer, a caricaturist had placed on the bust of that poet. Cesarotti had, indeed, the audacity to paraphrase and alter the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*! There was less presumption and more success in bestowing some Italian graces on the *Ossian* of Macpherson. He reconciled many southern readers, and among them Napoleon Bonaparte himself, to the equivocal bard of the north.

It was in 1796 that the English public, saturated with political disquisition and party invectives, were recalled to a sense of the sweets of literature and poetry, and especially to a taste for the Italian writers, by the publication of a book, whose merit, after all, is scarcely equal to its success, and whose success is mainly to be attributed to the fortunate period of its appearance. This was *The Life [of] Lorenzo of Medici*, by Mr. Roscoe,<sup>1</sup> an attorney and afterwards merchant and banker at Liverpool. After the horrors and wars, *plus quam civilia*, which revolutionary fanaticism in France, and the real or affected dread of it elsewhere, had diffused pretty generally throughout Europe, a languor succeeded; a strong desire for such enjoyments, as the calmer pursuits of poetry and criticism afford, bespoke a favourable reception for Mr. Roscoe's book, which was more easy and spirited in those parts which related to the revival of arts and literature, than in such as professed but failed to explain the changes and institutions of Florence under the Medici.

There was something *piquant* (to use a French term) in the appearance of a history of Florence written at Liverpool. Mr. Roscoe was a man of no

<sup>1</sup> [William Roscoe (1753—1831), historian, Member of Parliament for Liverpool, 1806—1807, in the Whig interest.]

great scope of genius. Yet when the nature and extent of his attainments is contrasted with his slender means of acquiring them, he becomes a sort of prodigy. He was the lad or waiter at a coffee house, and even that humble occupation had been a step from his original condition, for when a boy he was accustomed to bring potatoes with his father to market. His assiduity, cleanliness, and honesty recommended him, and some of the guests articulated him as a clerk to a thriving solicitor. His passion for letters was inextinguishable and his application unwearied. It was accidentally directed to Italian; and a friend (the Rev. Dr. Clarke, I think) being settled for some years in Tuscany, he collected through him various materials and dedicated himself to the composition of a work which immediately placed him on the line of the most successful authors of the day.

Lord Orford,<sup>1</sup> who had hailed Robertson and Gibbon, but not, I think, Hume, on the first appearance of their works, lived to offer similar incense in particles of epigrammatic antithesis to the biographer of Lorenzo de Medici. Mr. Fox, overlooking a style which he could not approve, through his delight at passages of Italian poetry not inelegantly rendered in the course of the work, greeted the publication and the author with encouragement. To the praise of Mr. Roscoe be it said, that neither this burst into sudden blaze nor his subsequent success in public life ever turned his head or disfigured the simplicity of his manners. He spoke in Parliament with judgment and effect, but in a short time, upon elections and other occurrences, there appeared some unequivocal symptoms of that indecision which disqualifies a man from public life more irretrievably than vulgarity or affectation or even than

<sup>1</sup> [Horace Walpole.]

ignorance and incapacity. He confined himself afterwards to his literary pursuits, and to establishing a taste for arts in his native town not unworthy of his celebrated Florence; and Liverpool bids fair to give to its architecture, public works, amusements, and society, a refinement not usual in communities so rapidly enriched by commercial enterprise alone.

In this task Dr. Currie,<sup>1</sup> the physician and the biographer of Burns, was his most active coadjutor. He had a stronger understanding, but less correct taste, than his friend. In his own profession he was distinguished for a new, bold, and successful application of cold water in certain stages of fever; and on matters of politics, science, and philosophy he had acquired great provincial authority. Some popular letters on the effect of the war upon trade, printed with the name of Jaspar Wilson, were with justice attributed to him, and added not a little to his reputation.

Roscoe, after shrinking from a contested election at Liverpool during the No-Popery cry, engaged in trade and was unfortunate. A body of his literary friends, led by Dr. Shepherd,<sup>2</sup> handsomely relieved him from many of the consequences, and alleviated the chagrin at his failure. Mr. Coke, of Norfolk, with much delicacy and generosity, employed him in classing his MSS. at Holkham, of which the curious library of Justus Lipsius forms a part. Roscoe, broken by misfortunes and somewhat impaired by age, did not show all the discernment expected from

<sup>1</sup> [James Currie, M.D. (1756—1805). Originally a native of Dumfriesshire, he emigrated to Virginia and spent seven years of his life in America. He studied medicine at Edinburgh with the intention of returning across the seas; but hearing that a doctor was wanted in Liverpool, he settled there in 1780.]

<sup>2</sup> [William Shepherd (1768—1847), Dissenting minister of Gateacre, near Liverpool, and author of a *Life of Poggio Bracciolini*.]



him; but he had the merit of being the first guest at Holkham who drew the attention of his host and directed his own to those philological treasures. Many men of learning and taste had been in the habit of visiting Mr. Coke; but all (according to Mr. Roger Wilbraham's malicious remark), including Dr. Parr, most delicately and politely caught the spirit of the place, and preferred the pleasures of the field and of the table to the intellectual labours of classical research. Roscoe and the literary society in Liverpool were not singular in their profession of liberal principles in politics and religion; almost all provincial *litterati* at the close of the seventeenth century (Whitaker and some clergymen excepted) were averse to the war and the system with which it was studiously interwoven. They were, accordingly, more or less stigmatised as visionary speculatists or disaffected Jacobins. The rebound from this contumely and repression was sensibly felt afterwards. It contributed with other causes to the successive and alternate reforms which have ensued.

Perhaps the insensibility to all intellectual merit which pervaded the Court of George III., and the yet more unaccountable indifference to the progress of literature of a man so capable of relishing and judging of genius as Mr. Pitt, estranged the whole republic of letters from their politics. Possibly the selection of "*savans*" in France for the direction of human affairs (no very successful experiment, it must be acknowledged) engaged the ardent spirits of the time in the cause of democracy. In aid of such propensities, a passion, or at least a curiosity, for German literature suddenly seized the reading part of the community. Young authors educated in Germany gratified this appetite for foreign novelties by plays,

novels, and poems, translated from the German originals. Whatever might be their motives, they were practically labourers in the same vineyard. The fruits of their studies had all a tang or smack of philosophy very opposite to that which it was the endeavour of our Government, as well [as] of our Church, to disseminate.

Among these, my college friend, Mr. M. G. Lewis,<sup>1</sup> commonly known by the name of his first novel, *The Monk*, deserves to be recorded; for, though a Member of Parliament, he supported the Minister and the French war. He inculcated in his writings opinions which led to a directly opposite conclusion. He had a clear and even a strong understanding, imagination amounting almost to genius, and indefatigable industry. As a poet he was endowed with an excellent ear and a command of elegant language. But his mind was vitiated with a mystical, though irreligious, philosophy; his taste in reading, writing, and thinking, corrupted by paradox; and his conversation disfigured by captious perverseness in controversy or sickly affectation in sentiment. His efforts at pleasantry, which were continual, were very unsuccessful. He had no talent for humour. He was sincere, affectionate, and generous; but his vanity was inordinate and more troublesome than diverting.

As he advanced in life he grew exceedingly tedious, especially upon all that related to himself; so that contrary to the usual course of things, the peculiarities and egotism which had been in some degree pardoned to his genius and youth, *when poor* became quite intoler-

<sup>1</sup> [Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775—1818), son of a large land-owner in Jamaica. He was for a short time attaché at the Hague, where he wrote *The Monk*; and sat in the House of Commons 1792—1802. Sir Walter Scott said of his verses, "He had the finest ear for rhythm I ever met with—finer than Byron's."]

able, and were, in fact, not tolerated in society when he succeeded to a large property in Jamaica. He went thither, and was nearly as prolix in his exhortations to his negroes as in his reports of their condition and treatment. It is but just to add he very earnestly endeavoured to the best of his judgment to improve the latter. He died on board ship in his return from his second visit to Jamaica. His obstinacy and paradox may be said to have brought him to that untimely end; for he persisted, against the prohibition of the only medical man in the vessel, to take emetics for sea sickness, and, weakened as he had been by a previous fever on shore, actually died of inanition and exhaustion.

The poetry, plays, and essays of a herd of male and female followers, of whom Dr. Darwin<sup>1</sup> was the chief, though in character and taste very different from Lewis', had a similar tendency to reconcile men's minds to approaching changes and to shake the received manner of thinking on religion and politics. Darwin himself, though a versifier rather than a poet, was a remarkable man. His medical practice, singular and startling, was not unsuccessful. His fame in Derbyshire and the adjacent counties was extensive, and not confined to the ignorant or the credulous. With an unwieldy person, uncouth manner, and large tongue, his appearance and conversation captivated strangers, and his more solid qualities attached a numerous body of friends. He was surrounded by admiring disciples. They imbibed, together with a taste for minute and curious observation in physical

<sup>1</sup> [Erasmus Darwin (1731—1802), physician. Grandfather of the more celebrated Charles Darwin. He married, as his second wife, the widow of Colonel Chandos-Pole, of Radbourne Hall, Derbyshire, where he lived for some years. He died quite suddenly of heart disease.]



philosophy, great intrepidity in the search of truth, and not less zeal in diffusing it.

In London there had started up, soon after the French Revolution, a yet more fearless sect, who, mingling the dogmas of materialism with certain visionary notions of the perfectibility of the human species, assailed without disguise all the received opinions upon which the duties of individuals or the institutions of the State had been hitherto founded or defended. These doctrines were not confined to metaphysical works; they were purposely and studiously insinuated in novels, plays, and productions of imagination.

Mr. Godwin<sup>1</sup> was in some sense the father of that school. If known at all to posterity, it will in all probability be as the writer of *Caleb Williams*, not as the author of *Political Justice*, which is already nearly forgotten. He was himself a strange compound of simplicity and of design, of talent and of folly. He plotted against the whole frame of society, but was the easy dupe of his own affections or the professions of his pupils. After a short season of equivocal celebrity, he sank into a hacking writer and concealed partner of the booksellers. The good little books in which our masters and misses were taught the rudiments of profane and sacred history, under the name of Baldwin, were really the composition of Godwin, branded as an atheist by those who unwittingly purchased, recommended, and taught his elementary lessons. Lord Grey (I write in 1834) has recently, by an act of good-nature, relieved this man

<sup>1</sup> [William Godwin, the elder (1756—1836), philosopher and novelist. He married, in 1797, Mary Wollstonecraft, the authoress, who died the same year. *The Adventures of Caleb Williams*, a novel, was one of his best-known works.]

of genius from penury and drudgery, and bestowed on him some small place under Government.

The strange and disgusting story of his marriage with Mrs. Wollstonecraft, together with the adventures and death of that wild but extraordinary woman, is in print and accessible to all the world. Soon after her death Godwin consulted Curran<sup>1</sup> about marrying again, and Curran warned him against making youth and beauty the chief object, and earnestly exhorted him to select a "*woman with something*." Curran, on his return from Ireland some years afterwards, visited his friend, and found that he had married a widow. "Well, and has she anything?" was his first question. "Aye, indeed has she!" replied Godwin. "She has eight children!"

Holcroft,<sup>2</sup> one of his least successful disciples, though cursed with the vice of mediocrity which, even in his plays, novels, or travels, a love of paradox could not animate, has left one book which is a great exception to such a censure, and of a nature to render all further notice of him unnecessary. This is his own life—the most curious picture of self-education in an authentic shape which our language possesses. It affords abundant proof of the enjoyment which an access of knowledge can afford to the humblest orders

<sup>1</sup> [John Curran (1750—1817), the Irish orator and judge.]

<sup>2</sup> [Thomas Holcroft (1745—1809), son of a London shoemaker, who fell into difficulties and turned pedlar. Young Holcroft accompanied his father on his wanderings, and became a stable-boy at Newmarket at the age of thirteen. Returning to London, he worked for some time at the shoemaking trade, which he then abandoned for the stage. He began to contribute articles to the newspapers about the same time, and to write plays with some success, *The Road to Ruin* being his best-known composition. He became deeply imbued with the principles of the French Revolution, and was indicted, in 1794, with Thomas Hardy and others, for high treason; but his case was dismissed without a trial. He was four times married.]

of society, and is a practical exposure of the error as well as selfishness of that philosophy which would confine it to the opulent. This Holcroft was one of the reformers singled out for prosecution and punishment by the proceedings of 1794. He married, I believe, the widow of Mercier, author of the *Tableau de Paris*, and their daughter married Mr. Kenney,<sup>1</sup> an author of some interesting melodramas and lively farces.

There was at the period of which I am now speaking another knot of yet younger enthusiasts. They were soon afterwards generally designated by the name of "the Lake Poets," because several of them settled in the romantic districts of Cumberland and Westmoreland. They were, at their outset, scarcely less extravagant in their principles, and much more so in their projects, than the materialists of Godwin's school, though they had the good-fortune to escape all legal persecution. Southey, the destined champion of the Church and Poet Laureate of three successive Sovereigns; Wordsworth, in time the *protégé* and supporter of Toryism in the North and the pattern, in the judgment of many, of purity both in language and thought; Coleridge, the hireling of every illiberal publication in its turn—were one and all, together with a host of young comrades and admirers, smitten with visionary notions of impracticable liberty, busy in translating or imitating the mystic philosophy and poetry of the Germans, and actually preparing to colonise on the Back Settlements of America for the purpose of establishing an entire exemption from all religious restraints or ceremonies, an equal division of property, and a community of wives. The press,

<sup>1</sup> [James Kenney (1780—1849). He married Holcroft's widow, not his daughter.]



in the meanwhile, teemed with their productions, all inculcating the wildest maxims of German metaphysics, and all combating the principles upon which the institutions of property, as well as the distribution of political power, are founded in society. They escaped, as I have observed, the Crown Lawyer's prosecutions, but they fell under the more appropriate lash of the ridicule of *The Anti-Jacobin*.<sup>1</sup> The Sapphics of Southey were parodied in a poem entitled *The Needy Knife-grinder*, and Mr. Frere and his coadjutors in their happiest vein exposed the sickly sentimentality and real immorality of the whole school, in a supposed German play, which combined nearly all their absurdities.

Mr. Southey<sup>2</sup> was the nephew of Mr. Hill, long chaplain to the factory at Lisbon, and afterwards rector of Streatham. In one of his visits to England he found his nephew, scarce twenty years of age, on the eve of marrying a girl without a halfpenny. To rescue him from such imprudence his uncle offered to take him through Spain to Portugal for a year, in the hopes that absence might cool his passion. Southey accepted the proposal; but, to defeat the real object of it, he secretly married the very day before he set off on his travels. The tour was not only gratis, but lucrative to him, for the sale of his lively and flippant account of it replenished his purse, and he embarked on a career of authorship and politics which, though desultory and tortuous, has always been directed to some profitable haven or another. His habits were those of an author by trade. Stated

<sup>1</sup> [A weekly review founded by Canning in 1797. *The Needy Knife-grinder* was also the joint production of Canning and Frere.]

<sup>2</sup> [Robert Southey (1774—1843), the poet and historian.]

hours set apart for his various studies. Poetry and prose, divinity and wit, had each their distinct periods of each day allotted to them. His handwriting was wonderfully neat, minute, and legible, and he told me that he saved no inconsiderable sum each year by this accomplishment, so numerous were his writings.

His vanity was inoffensive and diverting, and his enthusiasm, real or affected, about his literary pursuits pleasant and amiable. His confidence in his own powers was, indeed, preposterous, and his appetite for flattery, of which his family and friends served him with a constant and plentiful supply, was inordinate; yet, in spite of research and ardour, a sprightly imagination, and great raciness and accuracy in his English, he was not only a credulous and almost silly historian, but a weak reasoner and tiresome poet, and neither in prose nor in verse captivated or warmed his reader, though he might occasionally divert and surprise him. His egotism was excessive. He would fain have been arrogant; but his scorn and indignation, in spite of himself, assumed the character of flippancy and impertinence rather than of insolence or pride.

He was a schoolfellow and friend of Mr. Charles W. Wynne, and that gentleman procured him some small favour or pension in 1806. The touch of Treasury gold seems to have entirely altered the character of the man. From that time forth all his predilections have been for power, and, in its most odious form, exclusion and monopoly; and, what was yet more strange, most of his associates have accompanied him in this sudden and violent apostasy from his early principles. Possibly some little resentment, mingled with self-interest, deepened

the tinge which he and the other Lake poets received soon after Mr. Perceval's accession to power. *The Edinburgh Review* had censured the peculiarities of Southey's and Wordsworth's school. The sentence of that popular but stern tribunal of literature was sensibly felt in the sale of the works. Southey openly lamented that a man like Jeffrey,<sup>1</sup> who, in his self-complacency, he said, "in physical stature did not reach his shoulder, nor in intellectual dimensions his ankle," should yet have it in his power to kick away the harvest due to his industry and genius. *The Edinburgh Review* had, during the first years of its publication, acted up to the stern maxim adopted for its motto,

Cum nocens absolvitur iudex damnatur.

But surely it may be doubted whether the mortification and exposure of sundry pretenders to literary merit does as much service to the republic of letters as the lavish use of ridicule and invective does mischief, by deterring many modest but ingenious men from encountering their strictures.<sup>2</sup>

That formidable journal first appeared in 1802. The notion of it was suggested, in a small lodging or flat up four pair of stairs, by Sydney Smith to Mr. Jeffrey, Lord Webb Seymour, Mr. Horner, Mr. T. Thomson, and, I think, Mr. John Murray. Sydney proposed, with

<sup>1</sup> [Francis Jeffrey, Lord Jeffrey (1773—1850), Scottish judge, and editor of *The Edinburgh Review* from 1803 to 1829.]

<sup>2</sup> Bayle, in speaking of too great a fastidiousness or apprehension of coming before the public, says, "Ce défaut n'est pas fort commun parmi les auteurs et néanmoins on peut dire qu'à certains égards il ne l'est que trop; car pour l'ordinaire ce ne sont pas les mauvais auteurs ou les écrivains médiocres qui en sont coupables, ce sont *les plus excellentes plumes*": and surely the productions of nine or ninety-nine bad or middling works is not so serious an evil to the public as the suppression of one excellent or useful one.—V.H.



allusion to the diet of the country, to assume for their motto,

Musam meditamus avena,<sup>1</sup>

"We study the Muses on oatmeal": a suggestion which he says his Northern coadjutors vociferously rejected, though no bad specimen of the playful humour with which he enlivened some one article of every number for several years. Brougham was not one of the original projectors; Sydney Smith objected to his admission. His contributions, he said, would be too long, too many, and too political. Those of Sydney himself, often devoted to the exposure and ridicule of bad sermons and theological works, were ignorantly cited by parsons in England as singular proofs of the acrimony which still distinguished the Kirk of Scotland, and led them to satirise the writers of an Episcopal Church. Brougham, when admitted, verified one portion of Sydney's prediction. He overwhelmed the review with politics; but few of his fellow-labourers were by that time disposed to lament such an innovation, and the increasing sale produced by the introduction of such topics might have reconciled them to the change, had they retained more scruples about it.

An article upon Cobbett and the public journals, undertaken some eight or ten years after the commencement of the *Review*, and against the better judgment of Mr. Horner, by Mr. Jeffrey, at the suggestion of Brougham, stamped its character as a political publication irrevocably. Till then several persons quite unconnected with politics, and some absolutely adverse to the Whigs, had occasionally contributed papers—Wilberforce, Walter Scott, Richard

<sup>1</sup> ["Tenui Musam meditamus avena."]

Payne Knight,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Bartholomew Frere,<sup>2</sup> and many others. The number of the contributors, the facility with which contributions were admitted, and the secrecy often enjoined and generally observed, led to many false conjectures, and those conjectures to consequences, literary and political, that had influence on the opinions and conduct of individuals.

Cobbett exhibited a proof that demagogues, like Princes, when they act on bare suspicion, lose their sagacity. He was nettled at the unexpected exposure of his shameless tergiversation on the article above alluded to; he accordingly directed all his resentment against Mr. Horner, who was the only reviewer that had earnestly protested against it.<sup>3</sup>

Lord Strangford imagined that a severe stricture on his poetry,<sup>4</sup> written, in truth, by a fellow diplomat of anti-Jacobin and Tory propensities, was composed or instigated by me; and though assiduous enough in his correspondence with me while the Grenville Administration lasted, he scarcely concealed his resentment to me—and to all Whigs, soon afterwards. A more important personage, Lord Byron himself, was

<sup>1</sup> [Richard Payne Knight (1750—1820), the celebrated antiquarian and collector of coins.]

<sup>2</sup> This name must be omitted in any copy likely to be read before Lord Strangford's death.—V.H.

[Bartholomew Frere (1778—1851) was a younger brother of John Hookham Frere. He was Minister Plenipotentiary *ad interim* in Spain 1809—1810, and Secretary of Legation at Constantinople for some years.]

<sup>3</sup> Is it possible that, in this instance also, Brougham secretly and maliciously conveyed to the object of the invective, that not he, but the person who had in truth remonstrated against it, was the author? I have no ground for a suspicion, but the mischief and fun of such a manœuvre would not be out of character, nor a solitary instance of his so indulging his malice or revenge.—V.H.

<sup>4</sup> [*Poems from the Portuguese of Camoëns, with Remarks and Notes.*]

swayed in his conduct for some time from a misconception that the flippant review of his first poems, written, in truth, by Mr. Brougham, was the composition of George Lamb<sup>1</sup> at my instigation, whereas I never saw the poems, nor did I know of the existence of the author (for I thought the title extinct) till I read the review and expressed to some of the reviewers my surprise and regret at the unmerited and bitter severity of the article.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Strangford had not been less severely handled, but he had deserved it by the personal conceit of his egotism and the great infidelity of his translations. Invention, however, is more pardonable in a poem, and even a translation, than in an official letter. His verses from the Portuguese are creditable to his taste and ear, though they represent Camoëns as unfaithfully as his dispatches the events on the Tagus or the communications of the Sublime Porte. He has not, perhaps, met with the success he had reason to expect as an author or an orator. His facility in composing verse and prose is considerable, and his inferiority as a speaker, though undeniable, proceeds from no deficiency in utterance, language, or logic.

In London his acquaintance has never been much courted, either in literary or fashionable society, nor his conversation, though not wanting in knowledge, vivacity, or good breeding, much relished. His father had been expelled, by a very unusual Act of Parliament, from the Irish House of Lords, for a corrupt vote in a judicial proceeding. At his entrance in life,

<sup>1</sup> [George Lamb (1784—1834), brother of Lord Melbourne.]

<sup>2</sup> 1836. The manner in which this impression was effaced through the kind offices of Mr. Rogers, ever active in promoting reconciliations between his friends, is related elsewhere in my writings, and will, if this chapter be ever finished, be in all probability again alluded to and explained.—V.H. [See *ante*, p. 122.]



moreover, the disadvantage of that recollection was aggravated by extreme poverty, and there was nothing to counterbalance it but distant relationship with the Percies and Lord Egremont. To the latter, I believe, he was chiefly indebted for his first employment under Government, and to both, for the education which rendered him capable of discharging it. Success in his diplomatic career entitles him to a niche in the political rather than literary monuments of the day; but as he will not appear in any of my raising in that department to much advantage, it is fair to observe here that he dedicated the gains of the profession he embraced, in the first instance, to his mother and sisters, and showed in that particular a kindness of heart and a liberality of conduct which I much fear will not easily be inferred from other passages of his life.

## APPENDIX





## APPENDIX A

(See p. 10)

LORD STRANGFORD,<sup>1</sup> in some *Observations* on a note in Colonel Napier's book, has this year (1828) given a very different version of the whole story. From a dispassionate consideration of the documents he produces in his defence, and the account he gives of the whole transaction, I am inclined to believe that some *unimportant* particulars in my relation of them are incorrect. It is clear that his dispatch was *not* written in Reddish's Hotel, but in Bruton Street. It is possible, and indeed probable, that it was written at Mr. Canning's request, and that Mr. Canning urged as a reason, *though in all likelihood* not as the only reason, for writing it, that "he preferred the form of one unbroken dispatch, and that the publication of the whole of Lord Strangford's letters as they stood was impossible";<sup>2</sup> and it is true that the dispatch so written does not *directly* assert, as I had imagined that it did, that Lord Strangford had an audience of the Prince Regent immediately before his embarkation, and had persuaded him to embark. Lord Strangford, in his publication of this year, directly and repeatedly acknowledges that the embarkation of the Prince Regent was not the result *of his brief visit to Lisbon on the night of November 28, when the Royal Family were already embarked.*<sup>3</sup>

Thus far the real state of the facts may be more favourable to Lord Strangford than my representation of them in the text and the account I collected of them from the testimony of those whom I have quoted

<sup>1</sup> [These *Observations* were written by Lord Strangford in refutation of certain statements of Colonel William Napier's in his *History of the Peninsular War*; and Colonel Napier issued a pamphlet in answer upholding his view of the case.]

<sup>2</sup> Lord Strangford's *Observations*, pp. 5, 6.—V.H.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 10, 20, 22.—V.H.

in the preceding note; but the main point of the charge against Lord Strangford's veracity and the authenticity of the dispatch remains unrefuted. The dispatch was written in London and on December 19, not, as the date indicates, on board the *Hibernia* off the Tagus, November 29; and that false date, as well as the promise "to detail further particulars in a future dispatch," and the apology for haste at the end, prove the intention of the writer to deceive the public reader as to the time and place of the composition. The reasons for writing such a dispatch and the allegation of those reasons by Mr. Canning may be correctly noted by Lord Strangford in his *Observations*, but they do not disprove the facts which I have stated in my text and which I believe, namely, that Lord Strangford had arrived in London and written the dispatch afterwards printed in the *Gazette*, before the official intelligence contained in a dispatch really written on board the *Hibernia* by him had come to hand; secondly, that the original dispatch varied in many points with that written and printed in London; and thirdly, that Mr. Canning was thunderstruck at discovering such variations. It is, I think, undeniable that the printed dispatch, without positively propounding as a fact that Lord Strangford had prevailed on the Prince Regent to embark, is calculated and apparently intended to convey that impression to the reader, and it somewhat broadly implies that it was "in interesting communications with the Court of Lisbon" after November 27, that he prevailed on His Royal Highness to embark, or at least confirmed him in his previous intentions to that effect. In the dispatch Lord Strangford says that "on proceeding to Lisbon on the 27th, he had immediately most interesting communications with the Court of Lisbon," for the particulars of which he refers to some future dispatch: but adds, "It suffices to mention in this place that the Prince Regent wisely directed all his apprehensions to a French army, and all his hopes to an English fleet; that he received the most explicit assurances from me, etc., etc.; and that I promised, etc., etc." Nobody would doubt in reading the above passage that the interesting communications were immediately after Lord Strangford had proceeded to Lisbon on the 27th, that the particulars referred

to a future dispatch had occurred either on or after the 27th, and that the expression of the Prince Regent's hopes and fears, as well as the explicit assurances of Lord Strangford and his promises to the Prince Regent, were all made in an audience with the Prince Regent, or at least with his Ministers, after Lord Strangford had proceeded to Lisbon, and before the Prince Regent had embarked. The fact is now acknowledged by Lord Strangford himself that the Royal Family were already embarked during his brief visit to Lisbon, and that he saw M. D'Aranjo and the Prince Regent for the first time after his proceeding thither on board ship.



## APPENDIX B

(See p. 113)

### THE PRINCE REGENT'S VIEWS ON THE ROMAN CATHOLIC QUESTION

*(Account of a conversation between Lord Wellesley and Lord Holland  
on January 14, 1828.)*

I HAD a conversation with Lord Wellesley. In the course of it, after discussing many topics with his usual vivacity and ability, he was led to speak of the King's (George IV.) opinions on the Catholic question. He expressed not only regret but surprise at his recently avowed hostility to any further concessions to the Roman Catholics. He maintained that such language and opinion were in direct contradiction to declarations formerly made, and at variance with the principles he had repeatedly and *solemnly* professed to him. In support of this assertion he alleged the following facts.

When he was Secretary of State in 1811 or 1812, and Lord Fitzwilliam had given notice of a motion on the state of Ireland, he concurred with his colleagues on the propriety of resisting the motion, but thought it incumbent on him in doing so to disclaim all opposition to the measure generally called "Catholic Emancipation," and even to avow that he was favourably disposed to a removal of the remaining disabilities. Conceiving, however, that it would not become him to express an opinion so much at variance with those professed by his colleagues, without apprising the Prince Regent of his intentions, he waited on His Royal Highness, and stated at length his view of the obligation imposed upon him of avowing his own sentiments on that important question. He even

explained at some length the reasons on which they were grounded, and the view he had taken of the whole subject. The Prince Regent distinctly, and even earnestly, approved of his intention; first, as he said, because it was right for him to deliver his sentiments on such a subject, and secondly, because he, the Prince Regent, *concurred in the opinion he intended to express.*

I interrupted Lord Wellesley, to ask him if he was confident that he had not confounded an approbation of the manliness of expressing his opinion with an approbation of the opinion intended to be so expressed. "Certainly not," was his Lordship's reply; "the expression was distinct—'*he concurred in my opinion.*'" And he did not stop there; he called in Lord Liverpool and Mr. Perceval, and repeated to them the substance of my communication and his approbation, saying that I did right to state my opinion without reserve, for he thought I was called upon to do so, and that, moreover, in that opinion he entirely concurred."

Lord Wellesley then proceeded to relate a much stranger circumstance. When, after Lord Wellesley's retirement from office, Lord Donoughmore moved to refer the Catholic petitions to a Committee, Lord Wellesley had again a communication from the Prince Regent. I forget if it was in writing or by a message, but it was not merely an approbation of his avowing his opinions, and of the opinions he intended to avow, but a request, in the shape of a command, to express these opinions, and to state to the House and the country at large that he was expressing those of the Prince Regent as well as his own, and *that he had His Royal commands to inform the House that he, the Regent, concurred in all he said on the subject.* "These commands," added Lord Wellesley, "I took upon me, as I have frequently observed to His Majesty since, *most implicitly to disobey*": and he then appealed to me on the propriety of his own conduct in doing so, on the obvious objections in a constitutional point of view there would have been in such a declaration, and on the injurious effects it must have had (considering all that has since occurred) on the temper of the people of Ireland and His Majesty's personal character and honour.

He had, he said, subsequent to that period remarked some ill-humour to the Catholics and their supporters, some wavering and tergiversation, and some inconsistency in the language of his Royal Master on such topics, but never any decided avowal of hostility to the measure on principle; and he must, he added, moreover, remark that His Majesty's manner, language, and conduct when in Ireland was, even by the admission of Lord Sidmouth and others opposed to the Catholic claims, most injudicious and injurious to his honour and his Government, if he was really determined to resist on principle and in all circumstances any further concession to his Roman Catholic subjects. He assured me that the Irish Roman Catholics would not yet believe he had deserted them, that the postponement of the measure was generally attributed by them to some faction or intrigue in Court or in Parliament, and not to any hostility in the King's mind; that he was, in truth, still popular with that class of his subjects, from a persuasion that he was secretly friendly to their admission, and that, on the other hand, he was far from enjoying the confidence of their enemies, and was, in truth, an object of suspicion, if not of enmity, with all the high Orange party and self-constituted Protestant ascendancy in Ireland.

This distinct evidence of the Prince Regent's avowed support of the Catholic claims, I have thought it right to record, upon the almost irrefragable authority from which I received it. My testimony would certainly lead to a directly opposite conclusion, *viz.*, that he was often willing to leave an impression on those with whom he conversed that he was friendly to the admission of Roman Catholics to Parliament, but that he was studiously cautious of saying in distinct terms that he deemed that measure either practicable or expedient. The Duke of Orleans (Louis Philippe) told me that in the year 1814 or 1815, I forget which, he distinctly avowed his hostility to all concession whatever; and explained the nature of his repugnance to it and of his scruples, by saying that if Catholics could be lawfully admitted to political power they could not be lawfully excluded from the Crown, and the title of his family would in that case cease to be legitimate. This remark, however, was made at a period and in



a conversation where it was evidently the object of the English Prince to impress on the Duke of Orleans the duty of implicit obedience to what he considered the "legitimate" heir to the Bourbon throne, and to imply that it was religious, not political, considerations which had justified the English in departing from the regular line of succession.

## APPENDIX C

### LORD HOLLAND TO LORD GREY

*(Containing his report of a conversation with Sir John Leach.)*

(See p. 293)

12th June, 1820.

DEAR GREY,

I am hoarse, lame, gouty, nervous, and annoyed, but must write you a letter—not about my motion. I daresay that, at your distance, you disapprove it; but I am right, and were you here you would think so. However, I leave that to be explained by my speech, if I can deliver it, by time, and by conversation, if I am ever to get any of that commodity with you again. But there is a business more embarrassing. I shall not mention names by letter; you will probably guess, and perhaps your judgment on things will not be less impartial and good if you do not.

Since Saturday's post I have had two conversations not of my seeking. I was told Ministers expected, possibly meant, to be beaten to-night in the House of Commons on the question of adjournment, and then meant to resign to-morrow, leaving the King at issue with his Commons and without a Government. An answer was to be made last night by Liverpool to a remonstrance sent to him by the King against Canning's speech, which would, no doubt, maintain Canning stoutly (it did so), and thereby furnish an opportunity for dismissing the whole Ministry before their defeat in the Commons. My informant stated *himself* to be at a loss what to advise, because it depended on the practicability of forming a new Ministry. He therefore consulted me, *as his friend*, what he ought to do for his own honour and character and for the King's service; his notion, he added, had

been to advise the King to dismiss the present men directly (that was last night), to fetter any new Government he should appoint with *no* conditions whatever, and to send for me, Lansdowne and *Grenville*! to-day. In the course of our conversation when your name occurred, he always dwelt on the great pressure of time, and said with concern that you were in Northumberland.

The substance of what I said was that while an ostensible Ministry was in existence it was impossible for me, with any regard to my own character, feelings, or principles, to convey through him or any one else any opinion on the propriety or the impropriety of dismissing that Ministry; on the way in which such dismissal could be accomplished; or, indeed, on the practicability of forming any other Government. I was, therefore, compelled to decline saying one word on those topics or giving him any advice how to act.

I told him, however, as my private friend, what was, and long had been, my situation in political connection. From my long experience of your public conduct, confidence in your abilities, and private affection and friendship for you, I had transferred to you that political attachment I had felt for my uncle when alive. There might be, from there being less disparity in years and possibly in understanding between us, some slight difference in the degree, but none in the nature, of that political attachment. That, unless so improbable an event as a difference between us on some great question affecting the general policy of the country should ever occur, I not only could never be of any service to the King in office *without* you, but could only be of service to him by being brought there *by and under* you. The King, I supposed, must infer this from his knowledge of my general party principles. I was sure I could not be five minutes in his closet on matters connected with the formation of a Ministry, without his knowing it distinctly. Without reference, therefore, to present circumstances, I showed that sending for me would be quite idle, unless the intention were not only to admit you as a Minister, but to consult and to entrust you in the task of forming one; and if that were the intention, the direct method, always the best, was perhaps more emphatically so, because something like personal estrangement had



either subsisted or been rumoured to subsist between you and the King. As a general, though not invariable, rule, and always without reference to the immediate subject of our interview, I hinted that a King of England did best to place his confidence in some one man or, at least, some one party, and to leave to that person's or that party's discretion all union and coalition with others. I did not like to object to a man I so sincerely respect as Grenville, but I contrived in the course of conversation carelessly to observe that all political connection with him had dropped.

I then bantered my friend on the little comparative importance he attached to [the] House of Commons, and to various great measures on which men entrusted with power must make up their minds. He called the House of Commons *wild*, and seemed surprised when I told him that if he thought them *wild* he would think the public, if he knew their feelings on the same subject, quite *frantic*. He seemed to apprehend that, in spite of the public clamour and Parliamentary unwillingness to do much, the King would not be satisfied with a separation or even a divorce, unless the Queen were deprived of her title and dignity as well as of her relation to him. I could not help saying, "That in that case he was a damned unreasonable fellow." My friend seemed to imagine there could be no important measure but the Catholic question, from which remark I collected that that point might be conceded. I told him I differed with him extremely there. There were in my mind many measures—popular measures—of more importance to the stability and character of a Ministry and to the country than any squabble between man and wife could be: that as far as I had weight with parties in power I should recommend them to be very inflexible about such measures, and much more so than about men. I purposely avoided marking too distinctly what they were, but observed that [the] more a Government was harassed with such odious and painful subjects as the domestic quarrels of [the] Royal Family, the more prudent and the more incumbent upon them it would be to insist on everything that could benefit or, consistently with safety, gratify the country. I am afraid this part of my conversation did not please, and I was sorry to perceive it did not.

I need not tell you how I felt and do feel your absence. My line is, indeed, clear, whether you are absent or not; but indeed, my dear Grey, it is hardly fair to expect that that of other persons can be so. They cannot take upon themselves to act *for* you.

It is quite impossible for them to consult you on the emergencies that may arise at such a distance—an endeavour to do so is tantamount to not acting at all.

Yours,

VASSALL HOLLAND.

I hardly know what I have written: I am so harassed with cold and business.

Since I wrote, Lansdowne and Tierney have been here: both have had similar communications through different channels, and Lord Buckingham, I am told, has taken one of the same kind down to Dropmore. The only difference is that Lansdowne's and Tierney's informants (both political friends of ours) said they were authorised by [the] King to communicate and consult: my friend only asked me my advice for the regulation of his own conduct. Tierney said nothing could be done in [the] House of Commons, *and* the King's cause there was lost; and he suggested, not to dismiss the Ministry, but to leave them to entangle themselves and disgrace themselves more. Lansdowne is most properly afraid of putting ourselves at all at the mercy of the Court in case of a change, but seems to think that union with some of the present men, Liverpool especially, would secure you more effectually against that evil than I think it would; but I cannot enter into all the various views and speculations and shades of opinion. Lansdowne constantly and naturally urges your coming up.

Yours,

VASSALL HOLLAND.

I should add, in case Tierney forgets it, that his informant said distinctly the King had no personal objection to your being, not only a Minister, but first Minister, and his informant, I am sure, would wish to see you so.

## APPENDIX D

### JUNIUS LETTERS

ON Tuesday, May 29, 1834, I dined at Norfolk House; and the conversation turned, after dinner, as it does too often everywhere, on the question who was the author of *Junius*. However, on this occasion I heard something new and worth remembering.

Lord Albemarle, a man of a good memory and strict veracity, said he had once been present at a conversation (after much wine had been drunk) between Mr. Dudley North and Sir Philip Francis. The former rallied the latter somewhat rudely as the author of *Junius*, said it was vain to deny it, and that everybody so considered him, and took him to task for various opinions and expressions in the work. Francis grew angry, and with more solemnity than was usual exclaimed, "Do you then mean, sir, seriously to tell me that I am a scoundrel or a liar? I have denied distinctly my being the author, and after that they who believe I am must believe me to be a liar or a scoundrel or both."

Dudley North then changed his battery; and, disclaiming all serious suspicion of the fact, implied he was unequal to the task, with much more to vex him and put him off his guard. At last he said: "In short, it is idle to talk so much about it: we all, in truth, know how it is—Lloyd<sup>1</sup> wrote the letters and you corrected the press."

Francis at these words seemed startled; he coloured

<sup>1</sup> [Charles Lloyd (1735—1773), Private Secretary to George Grenville, and the writer of several political pamphlets in his patron's interests. Lord North certainly at one time entertained suspicions that Lloyd was the author of the *Junius Letters*.]



and answered, as Albemarle thought, with emotions of surprise: "*You have made much worse guesses, sir, in your life than that.*"

It tallies with my impressions of Francis's conversations, inasmuch as he always seemed to me to know or imply something about *Junius*, but to *deny* strictly his being the author.

THE  
LIFE OF  
JAMES OGLETHORPE  
BY  
JAMES OGLETHORPE

THE  
LIFE OF

THE  
LIFE OF  
JAMES OGLETHORPE  
BY  
JAMES OGLETHORPE

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